Geographies of Home: A study of women's socio-spatial narratives of home and self-identity

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Declaration

I certify that I am the sole author of this work.

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore women's experiences and understandings of home. Two very different perspectives are evident in existing feminist literature on women and home. The first emphasises connections between home, the distinction between public and private, and the perpetuation of constraining gendered roles and expectations. The second emphasises the symbolic, emotional and personal expressivity of home spaces for women. This thesis seeks to examine the interface between these perspectives as it is played out in women's lives. I show how women make and re-make their self-identities partly through and in relation to home spaces.

I explore the relationship between constructions of gender and of home through women's personal accounts of their home spaces. The accounts were collected through repeat, in-depth interviews with six women aged between twenty seven and thirty four, who own their homes, and who, at the start of the interviews, were living with partners and had no children. The interviews take the form of narratives in which the women tell of both the everyday nature of the homes in which they live, and their experiences – including memories and expectations - of home.

Chapter Four, the first of three substantive chapters, examines the interweaving of homeownership and adulthood in stories of complex transitions. I suggest that the process of homeownership can usefully be understood as a 'rite of passage' which, while potentially creating spaces in which the women feel grown up, is problematically gendered. These problems are articulated through women's discussion of the difficulties they encounter in balancing their needs for privacy with ideas and expectations of intimacy and care.

Chapter Five focuses on stories about mothers, mothering and mother-daughter relationships. Considering women's memories of their mothers in relation to their stories about their current homes, I highlight ways in which narratives of home are infused with construction of 'woman' as 'mother'. The dense interweaving of 'woman', 'mother' and 'home' generates fusions and confusions that are manifest in socio-spatial limitations and frustrations the interviewees describe.

In Chapter Six, I consider the idea of home as a space within which family relations are rooted, returned to and relived. Thrown into sharp relief by the loss of past home spaces, the transcripts suggest a sense of home as an emotional journey of relationships embedded within identifiable and accessible spaces. There is also a tension in these stories between a desire for continuity and the pressure of change.

The thesis concludes by examining the metaphor of a web or collage in which the experiences of home and self are woven together, arguing that this is a useful way to represent and analyse the multiple and fractured strands of experience and expectation that make up women's relationship with home spaces.

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Contents

Chapter One

Setting up the story

1.1 Introduction

This research investigates the ideas and processes of home. It is based in a belief that the home spaces people occupy play a central role in their everyday social relations and personal lives. In her review of home within geographical discourse, Domosh (1998) claims that though the home is often thought of as the most mundane of spaces, it is also one of the most profoundly felt. It is, she suggests, this very profundity, in all its banality and complexity, which ties people to those spaces they call home and makes such spaces sites in which people's geographies are made and re-made. Through the work that follows, I unpack the seeming banality of the everyday routines played out in home spaces and, in so doing, seek to understand the complex weaving of pervasive and personal social relations that are created through, lie within and emanate from, those places known to people as 'home'.

The particular focus of this thesis is women's experiences of home spaces in Great Britain. This focus is informed by an ongoing feminist critique of home and understands women to have a particular, and problematic, relationship with the idea and experience of home. In part, this relationship is determined by the separation of private and public spaces, activities and relations; this separation, albeit a contested one, is woven through the idea of home in ways that perpetuate potentially constraining gendered roles and expectations of women. Feminist literatures have also emphasised the ways in which women's relationship to home spaces is a process of emotional engagement and personal expression that can contain moments of subjugation but can also be a means of

resistance and reinvention. In this research, I aim to work at the juncture between these two approaches to women's relationship with home in order to unpack the many layers of experience that are interwoven through constructions of gender and of home. In doing this, I offer a retelling of the way in which women's narratives of home are a criss-crossing of experiences, thought of as intimate and personal, with those structures and relations considered to be more public.

Through this research I also explore the possibilities of stories as a means of collecting and representing women's geographies of home. Such a choice is underpinned by a belief in the power that stories hold of both the everyday and the extraordinary. Appreciating the way in which lives are often storied acknowledges the complexities of personal geographies; the way in which stories can be constructed potentially allows for geographies that are dynamic, fluid and which are created by reference to relationships, events and discourses that exist on a variety of scales and at differing times. However, to date this is seldom used within geographical work. A desire to consider the use of stories informs the methodological choices that I have made; the thesis is a collection of stories of home told by the women that is punctuated by my, analytical stories. When read together, these stories offer a means of relating individual events while also offering a means to interpret those events in terms of the wider, pervasive and theoretical discourses.

1.2 Thesis structure

The thesis begins with an overview of research literature that informs my research in order to provide a context for the substantive work that follows. In Chapter Two, I discuss the main themes of the research; work done on home, women's relationship to it, and ideas of self-identity are all considered. Through this discussion, I argue for an understanding of home as a socio-spatial construction that results, in part, from pervasive social discourses and, in part, from personalised emotional processes. Such an understanding is, I suggest, central to appreciating the many dimensions of home spaces and the entangled

web of expectations, associations and experiences that represents ideas of home. I also argue in this chapter that such discussions have particular resonance for women. Through discussion of feminist work, in particular that of feminist geographers, I outline the processes by which discourses of gender overlap and overlay discourses of home and the continued impact this has on women's social relations and geographies. In conclusion, I argue that conceiving of home as a narrative offers the possibility of understanding the complexity of women's accounts of home spaces.

Introducing the idea of narratives as a means of understanding experiences of home leads into the discussion of narratives as methodology and method that is Chapter Three. In this chapter I discuss the challenge that feminist theorising has had upon the epistomological and methodological basis of geographical research and how this has impacted upon the method adopted in this project. Chapter Three also lays out the processes by which the research was done and critically reflects upon the strategies I mobilised for gathering, analysing and disseminating research data. In particular, I discuss the possibilities and problems that collecting personal narratives of home from a small group of women offers in terms of carrying out feminist research.

The thesis then considers the narratives of home that emerge from the research. I do this in three substantive chapters which each consider a strand, or fragment, of the webs of home and self-identity that the respondents constructed. Chapter Four examines the women's narratives of feeling grown up and how this is related to their homeownership. Through these stories I suggest that homeownership can usefully be thought of as a 'rite of passage' in which home space is used to mark out the achievement of adulthood and a sense of being grown up in terms of feelings of independence, control and commitment. In many ways these narratives are ones of empowering distinctions. However, the women also suggest that the movement into ownership and associated adulthood is a series of complex transitions and compromises that are problematically gendered. In this chapter I examine the problems of becoming a home owning

woman through the women's discussions of their partnered ownership, their experiences of privacy in their homes and the difficulties of reconciling these with expectations of intimacy and care.

Chapter Five focuses on stories about mothers, mothering and daughter-mother relationships. This chapter contains stories that are of the current day, of the past and look forward to the future as the women consider their own lives in relation to the memories they have of the lives of their mothers. The narratives I explore revolve around work; they are about housework, paid work and the work of mothering and of the frustrations, and difficulties, that circle the women as they negotiate their varied workloads at home and beyond. Through retelling such stories I explore a construction of home that is infused with the construction of 'woman' as 'mother' and show how the interweaving of these constructions creates fusions and confusions which, in turn, lead to social and spatial limitations in the women's day-to-day lives.

In the final substantive chapter, Chapter Six, I consider the ways in which home spaces offer an ongoing context for family relations. Brought into focus through discussions of selling and moving homes, these narratives of home construct spaces in which family relationships are rooted, returned to and relived. Through exploring the feelings of loss and grief that the women talked of, I suggest that the transcripts evoke a sense of home as an emotional journey of relationships embedded within particular spaces. These stories of emotional relations and attachments are, however, overlaid with discourses of rationality and the pressures to be flexible and mobile. This overlaying of grief with rationality creates uncertainties in narratives of home which the women think of as being gendered and I conclude this chapter by considering this process.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis. I suggest that the narratives told through the research are testimony to the complexity of women's lives and of the way that they make and re-make their self-identities in relation to their homes. Further to this, I suggest the multiple fragments of narrative that criss-cross

through the transcripts are best appreciated through the metaphor of a web. I conclude that thinking of a web facilitates an understanding of women's narratives of self-identity and home that is appreciable as a whole, while at the same time, making distinct the many varied strands of experience that go together to make up those narratives.

Chapter Two

Narratives of home, woman and self-identity

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the context for my research. It provides an overview of the relevant research literature and demonstrates how this has informed the exploration of home that I have undertaken in this thesis. I present three main strands of discussion of literature; I consider in turn ideas of home, women in relation to home and concepts of self-identity. In the discussion on home I demonstrate how work from across social sciences has opened up the idea and experiences of housing to allow for an examination of the idea of home as a social and spatial construct of emotional relations. Such considerations of home have led to an appreciation of the multiple ways in which experiences of self-identity are entangled with the experiences of home. In this section, I suggest that the relationship between home and self-identity is best understood if home is conceived of as a process that encompasses many threads of expectation and experience.

Turning to the literature on women's relationships with home, I examine the way in which feminist work has developed the critique of home spaces. I argue that it is important to unpack the many experiences of home that lie within any one household in order to appreciate the particular relationships that individual members of a home have with it. I show that through doing this, feminists – and in particular feminist geographers – have illuminated the ways in which understandings and experiences of home are infused with pervasive discourses of gender. Thus, the idea of home as simply a space away from the pressures of

public life is refuted and understandings of the role that a home plays in people's, and in particular women's, lives become more complex.

The third main theme that I address in this chapter is the idea of self-identity. I outline two approaches to self-identity, contrasting the linearity of Anthony Giddens' project of self with the multiplicity of Morwenna Griffiths' use of a web as a metaphor for self. I suggest that using the idea of a web to appreciate the lives that women lead is more useful because it offers the possibility of encompassing the many fragments and disjointed stories that make up women's self-identity. In concluding this chapter, I draw together the various strands of discussion to explain the rationale for the specific concern of this research and the development in the understanding of women's experiences of home and self-identity that it represents.

2.2 The house, the home and homeownership.

Discussions of home have often been framed within discussions of homeownership and this thesis focuses upon women homeowners in particular. Such a focus is informed by an understanding of homeownership as different from the idea of home that comes from renting. This is not to deny those who rent a sense of home and investment in the ongoing material and social relationships associated with home building. Rather, the focus on homeowners recognises the ways in which home and homeownership have become entangled in a web that constructs ideas of control, empowerment, independence, success, security and participation. These associations are not to be taken for granted however, and in this section I consider the problematical development of such understandings of home and homeownership.

2.2.1 Homeownership: tenure preference and ideology

The experience and process of homeownership has increasingly come to hold a central role within Britain as rates of ownership have continued to rise through the 1900s and into the 2000s. Homeownership has become the preferred form of tenure amongst the population at large, so much so that the majority of the

households in the country now own their own homes (Forrest, 1983; Forrest, Murie & Williams, 1990; McLaverty & Yip, 1993; Scottish House Condition Survey, 1996; Social Trends, 2002). The social, economic and political processes and implications that are associated with the prevalence of this form of tenure are well rehearsed. Analysis and interpretation of the phenomena of home ownership has considered the ideology of the property owning democracy and constructions of citizenship (Dovey, 1992; Murie, 1998); the patterns of consumption that ownership creates and sustains (Forest and Murie, 1995; Gilroy, 1994) and issues of social exclusion and tenure fragmentation (Kemeny, 1992; Lee, 1998; Mulder & Wagner, 1998).

Homeownership has come to be characterised as important not only for individuals and their housing aspirations, but also for governments and economies. It has been long encouraged, perhaps most voraciously since the 1970s when political ideologies of the New Right actively promoted homeownership over social housing. Homeownership has often been understood as promoting, and providing, a sense of investment and stability; both on the level of those societies that engage with it and those individuals who seek it (see for example, Hamnett, 1999; Malpass, 1993; Mullins, 1998). The act of owning a home has been presented as an agent for social transformation and stands at the centre of what has become known as 'the home-owning democracy'. In societies where homeownership predominates there is thought to be a shift in the balance of responsibility for the provision of housing, with individual citizens taking responsibility for the procurement and maintenance of their homes. In such a system, the individual is claimed to therefore not only gain a sense of personal investment - of assets and in some sense of community - but to also take responsibility for creating and sustaining that investment (McLaverty & Yip, 1993; Agnew, 1981).

In understanding the means by which people secure shelter, and the means by which this has become entangled with debates of citizenship, participation, inclusion and autonomy, there lies the potential to understand some of those

social and material relations around which people structure and experience their social worlds. The process of homeownership can therefore be seen as pertinent to the study of human geographies as claiming ownership over a house is to claim a space through which, and from which, individuals assert key rights and assume certain obligations of a political, economic and social nature. The importance of homeownership as a system through which people make order of social and material relationships at a variety of scales is an important underpinning of this thesis. However, this research moves on from this to suggest that homeownership can be understood to be a series, or collection, of emotional relations with people, places, structures and so on.

This research therefore develops an idea of home, and the processes of homeownership involved in the idea of home, beyond an economic process or an exchange of investment from state to individual. It engages with homes and with homeownership as an emotional process in which people involve themselves in an idea of home. In the work that follows in this thesis, the home, and ownership of a home, are understood to be the means by which people realise their understandings and aspirations of self-identity. The process of home that lies within the act of homeownership is therefore one infused with emotional understanding, development and journeys. As theorist Gaston Bachelard (1969) suggests:

> the house is not experienced from day to day only ... through dreams the dwelling places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days. Thus the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind [sic] ... Without it, man [sic] would be a dispersed being. (Bachelard, 1969, p5)

The process of ownership is therefore understood to be part of an articulation of home that incorporates within it the emotional investment of dwelling and the connections this has with the realisation of a sense of self-identity. It is this sense of home, as a series of emotional engagements and significations, which is the focus of the research presented in this thesis.

2.2.2 Re-inscribing the 'home' in 'homeownership'

A focus upon the emotional experience of housing and homeownership reflects the increasing importance within housing literature accorded to meanings of home and of ownership for the individual. These writings have sought to unpack the experiences that people have of housing and home on a more emotional level; considering not only the wider, societal scale of ownership but also the possibilities for personal social relations and negotiations that lie in housing (see for example, Agnew, 1981; Chapman & Hockey, 1999; Cooper Marcus, 1995; Depres, 1991; Dupuis & Thorns, 1996; Rybczinski, 1986, Somerville, 1992). Informing this critique is a tacit understanding of the house as something beyond the four walls that make up the fabric of a particular property. As Saunders and Williams (1988) suggest, the home that people dwell in, and oftentimes own, is more than bricks and mortar; not simply about economic ownership the home is a variety of related issues that are understood, organised and experienced in a relational and emotional way. The home is, they therefore claim, a space which holds within it special meaning and significance for individuals, being that place in which particular social relations and activities are undertaken and understood.

In their call for a new focus on the idea of home within housing studies, Saunders and Williams (1988) urge an understanding of home that is both beyond the physical space of a house and the social unit of household that is often thought to lie within the house (also Saunders, 1989). Within the traditional separation of ideas of house and household there is little room for an idea of home as much more than as a cipher through which an explanation for the workings of either the house or the household can be made. Their claim is therefore for a re-conceptualisation of home based within a belief that it is a social and spatial fusion that constructs and shapes experience in particular ways and on a number of scales. The agenda Saunders and Williams (1988) begin to articulate is for an understanding of home that realises the fusion between the materiality of the house and the socially related household:

> The home, in other words, is a socio-spatial system. It is not reducible either to the social unit of the household or to the

> physical unit of the house, for it is the active and reproduced fusion of the two.
> (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p83)

The importance of this is the way in which it develops a relationship between the house as a spatial unit and the household as a social unit. Saunders and Williams (1988) therefore open up analytical space in which to conceive of the home as a socio-spatial experience. Such an understanding has the possibility of holding and framing the emotional and relational processes that individuals engage in on a day to day level and over their life course, within the house and in spaces that lie beyond those four walls.

Within this account, I suggest that there is a clear difference drawn between the idea of house and home. While for many the two concepts remain intertwined, with the idea and experience of home being played out within the houses in which individuals live, the precise overlaying of one on the other ceases to be an easy, or indeed satisfying, process. To engage with people's experience of housing within the distinction that Saunders and Williams (1988) draw, might be to offer comment on the access that people have to markets, housing stock and so on; it can be understood to encourage those discussions of housing that have been alluded to above. However, to engage with the idea of home that they advocate is to work with the intimacies and intricacies of the ways in which people create, and live out, expectations of themselves through the socio-spatial idea of home. Further to this, I would suggest that within the reading of home and housing offered by Saunders and Williams (1988) can be found a way to understand how it is that the property bought when a house is purchased comes to signify and embody those material and social relationships that individuals have over a variety of scales. Within the lines they try to draw between the idea of home and house is a dynamic of relation and experience. This dynamic speaks of the complexities that the idea of home holds for individuals and the investments they are willing to make in that idea through the attaining and maintaining of a space known to them as 'home'.

Within this argument I suggest there is a re-inscribing of the idea of home within the study of homeownership and it is in that re-inscription that the exploration of this thesis lies. The idea of home that lies within the purchased house is one through which individuals find a sense of orientation; orientation for relationships and spaces that occur both within and beyond the space of the home. It is an idea of home that extends beyond the provision of shelter and offers the opportunity to unpack the particular relationship that an individual may have with the property that they purchase to be their home. It is this process of understanding and experience of home, within the process of ownership, that is the concern of this thesis. It understands that what is striven for, and possibly attained, in the act of ownership is not only a shelter but also an ongoing emotional and relational journey. The stories that are told here seek to understand that process of home that lies within the process of ownership.

Saunders (1989, 1990) offers further expansion of this idea of home within the process of home ownership. He begins to unpack the ways in which people characterise their houses and the experiences of home that dwell within them. He found that commonly people evoke ideas of home through language that conveys feelings of warmth, relaxation, and autonomy. Thus, he suggests, through language people create a particular relationship with the idea of home that is distinct from the relationship that they have with houses. Such language is also found in work done by Gurney (1999a) into the construction and use of metaphor in the experience and expectations that people have with the idea of home. Through examining a variety of documentation – from local government policy documents to peoples' own testimonies collected through in-depth interviews – Gurney (1999a) seeks to disentangle the meaning that lies within repeatedly used phrases such as 'home is where the heart is' and 'an Englishman's home is his castle'. He suggests that these phrases, and the common linguistic associations that Saunders (1989) alludes to, hold within them the power of the idea of home. This power is central, Gurney (1999a) suggests, to people's sense of security and also the centrality of this particular idea within the process of homeownership. Gurney (1999a) uses these

metaphors, and the role they play within popular and policy discourses, to illuminate the processes by which homeownership predominates as a form of tenure in Britain (also see Franklin, 1990; Jacobs, 1993; Ratner, 1996).

There is, however, a difference between the approach that is adopted by Gurney (1999a) and that taken by Saunders (1989, 1990). In Saunders' account of the meaning of home there is, I would suggest, a certain stasis. He seeks to understand a meaning of home that is created in the act of ownership, investing in that act the creation of feelings that continue to be reflected in the form in which they initially arose. So, in his account of home, Saunders (1989, 1990), divides the experience of homeownership from tenancy; he associates the former with senses of pride, security and investment in the property and distances such feelings from the experience of renting (also see Saunders and Harris, 1989). Within the act of ownership, a sense of home is therefore understood as important, but it leaves a certain silence in respect of the ongoing process by which understandings of emotions in relation to the idea of home are created. The experience that Saunders (1989) conceives of as lying within the actual ownership does not, therefore, fully encompass the continuing and dynamic relationship that individuals have with their homes.

This thesis attempts to fill this silence as it engages with the ongoing relationship that people have with the home that they purchase. This reflects and develops the sense of continuity and ongoingness that Gurney (1999a) alludes to. His insistence that housing studies embrace the ongoing processes of home bound up in understandings of tenure, necessitates an appreciation of the dynamics of the relationship people have with the idea of home over a variety of social, temporal and spatial scales. In Gurney's (1999a) account, for example, there is a movement from policy rhetoric to personal testimony that has within it a sense of the ongoing; socio-tenurial rhetoric acts upon people's experiences of home as they build up expectation, mould their actual experience and serve to channel their future housing plans. Within such movements there is obviously a dialogue of power that is important when considering the ways that tenure preference and

prejudice is developed (see for example Gurney, 1999b). However, for the purposes of this study it is the dynamic and evolving sense of home contained within Gurney's work that is of interest. The dialogue of power in tenure choice is not, therefore, the primary concern here, rather I am concerned with a dialogue of power between the pervasive and personal constructions of gender that are played out in the ongoing process of home.

The sense of home as an ongoing project is one that is very much realised in Gurney's (1997) use of episodic ethnographies as a means of examining and conceptualising home. In his attempts to engage with the ongoing process of home, Gurney evokes the idea of episodes that contain within them instances of experience, relations, and emotions. He claims that it is within the idea of home that the threads running through or between those instances, or episodes, are worked out and understood: the idea of home is therefore one that encompasses change – for example in relationship when people marry – but one that retains an integrity. In such a scheme of understanding it is therefore a re-inscription of home into homeownership in an ongoing manner; ownership becomes a process that encompasses expectation, the act of purchase and the continued experience of owning a home. I suggest that the importance of Gurney's (1997) use of episodic ethnographies is that they create space for the multiplicities of home that are incorporated into the ongoing process of ownership. They allow for understanding and encompassment of instances, relations and experiences beyond the singular act of purchase and what that act can represent. Within the development of the ethnographies are those threads of experience that give rise to the narratives of home that people weave for themselves, both over time and in a given moment, both in direct relation to the status of their tenure and in relation to wider processes and events.

2.2.3 The home as a socio-spatial landscape of emotion

The focus upon homeownership in this research is, I have suggested, a process of engaging with an ongoing relationship with the idea of home. In order to do this it is necessary to consider the home beyond its economic status and to

understand it as a socio-spatial experience. Thus, my engagement with home recognises the social, personal and emotional processes – both material and symbolic – that constitute, and are contained within, home spaces. The constructions of home that are told in this research are those that evoke the emotional, personal and social engagements that are woven through people's personal experiences of home. It is, as Carston and Hugh-Jones (1993, p3) suggest, an attempt to understand people's experience of home 'in the round'. I therefore seek to weave the emotional geographies that women create with the social geographies they are positioned within, and themselves mobilise, in order to understand the complex and varied interactions that create their particular narratives of home. As Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1993) suggest:

> Intimately linked both physically and conceptually, the house is the loci for dense webs of signification and affect and serve as basic cognitive models used to structure, think and experience the world.
> (Carston and Hugh-Jones, 1993, p3)

I therefore draw upon an appreciation of the idea of home beyond that of simple shelter, economic processes and pragmatism, or pervasive political ideology. As Karjalainen (1993) suggests, the homes that people construct within the shelter that the house provides are a collection of relational and emotional processes:

> House is a material object, but home is relation ... home is an emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and the dwelling places.
> (Karjalainen, 1993, p71)

Within such an approach, the home is a space within which people make sense of their material and social relationships. Homes are therefore conceived of as a socio-spatial means through which individuals may find a sense of orientation and meaning. This works on a variety of scales; within the home meaning can be made of both intimate personal relationships and wider scale, pervasive relations that are often thought of as lying beyond the home. Thus, the homes that people make can be understood to hold an important emotional resonance for both individuals and communities; a resonance that moves beyond the idea of home as simply a practical organisation of space. The house may be the space

of living, but the home is an expression of meaning that individuals make of the many relationships that they have within, and outwith, their homes.

Within geography, this difference between the house and the home has been alluded to in the appeal that has, at times, been made to Heidegger's concept of dwelling (see for example Harvey, 1996). The idea of dwelling has allowed some geographers to extend the parameters around the idea of home, in that it combines the material space of the house with an emotional experience that creates some sense of home as an experience. In Heidegger's writings the space of the home is one in which spiritual unity is to be found (in this sense it has parallels with Bachelard's (1969) ideas of emotional continuity and home previously mentioned):

> ... in this way it [the house] designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time (Quoted in Harvey, 1996, p300).

The home can be therefore understood as being wrapped within the experiences that are lived through, and hoped for, within a house that provides the spatial container for those experiences. As Douglas (1991) suggests, the experience of home is, in part, tied to the space of the house but it is not only a matter of negotiating the physicality of a given series of apartments (also see Dovey, 1985; Massey, 1992, 1993). To recognise only the physicality of home would be to suggest that the terms home and house were interchangeable and this is not the case. As Heidegger's idea of dwelling and Bachelard's allusion to dreams both suggest, the idea of the home is multidimensional – encompassing both space and emotion – in the way that the idea of a house is not. To engage with the idea of dwelling is to understand home as a confluence, or a dynamic juxtaposition, of the material of the social relations and of symbolic representations that find form within the material space of the house.

In her work on Norwegian homes, Gullestad (1995) offers an example of the emotional landscape of home that is found to dwell within the physical landscape of a house. After interviewing individuals about the decorations they had undertaken in their homes, Gullestad (1995) claims an understanding of

home as a system through which individuals create and express such things as personal identity, the identity of the family, notions of security and safety, independence, self sufficiency and so on. She suggests that in the processes of house building and decoration lie the processes of home making; such processes are the material means through which individuals create and display the lives that they understand themselves to have led or be leading (also see Pratt, 1981; Ellis, 2000; Gregory, 2000). In this way a home, which is housed within the four walls of a house, becomes a construct of - indeed is constructed through – emotional and social experience and expectation. The house therefore contains the notion of home, but the idea of home transcends the house itself, becoming a space or series of spaces, in which the imagining of identity, and its associated relations of emotion, can be realised. As Gullestad (1995) notes, in the stories of people's homes are woven the stories of people's life stories; it is as if bound up in the bricks and mortar which people have occupied are the lives that they understand themselves to have led.

Understanding of home as a weaving of social and emotional experience and expectation is also supported by Rapoport (1995). He suggests the home is a special place to which individuals accord great meaning and from which they can derive great meaning. Rapoport (1995) goes on to suggest that in order to better appreciate the meaning people attach to the concept of home, consideration needs to be given to both the psycho-social and the socio-spatial relevance of the homes people inhabit. By this he means that homes contain within them symbolic and actual relations that serve to fulfil individual, and collective, human need. The idea and experience of home offers a window through which the various 'anchors' of social life can be viewed, grasped and realised – both in a lived sense and an academic one. The term home conjures up psychologically symbolic associations and characteristics that create social and emotional order while also providing a space within which that order can be placed and played out. A home, therefore, offers a symbiosis of real and figurative space within which people and relationships can be made, re-made, recognised and understood.

In his research into the meanings and significance of home, Gurney (1997) draws on accounts that speak of the way homes hold people in particular patterns of relations. In the accounts he collected, the homes within which people dwelt provided spaces which shaped their understanding of themselves as sons, daughters, adults, married and so on. Although told through the events of change and disruption, the ethnographic account which Gurney (1997) gives speaks of the threads of meaning – meanings of spaces, places, selves and relationships - that are constantly woven into and through the experience of home. Living in the same home as a child and an adult is, for the couple whose ethnography Gurney (1997) draws out, problematic because of the complex interplay between those material and symbolic structures, and relationships, of childhood that are present and represented within that home. As Gurney (1997) suggests, it is the space of the home which creates and contains the means by which the individuals make sense of what has been and, as the ethnography he discusses demonstrates through the problems contained within it, the creation of such markers of self are powerful ones:

> This period of making sense of home ... was a difficult time characterised by the coalescence of housing and life histories. Events, conversations, smells, and emotions of that home at that time are now indelibly etched upon them.
> (Gurney, 1997, p378)

The events, conversations and so on are the 'anchors' of which Rapoport (1995) writes; they are those things – those tangible and those intangible things - by which individuals connect with particular home spaces and that which connects home spaces to people.

A similar sense of the emotional landscapes of home can be found in Bordo, Klein and Silverman's (1998) account of the apartments they had lived in when they were growing up. As the three sisters set about mapping their childhood homes they evoke a sense of home space as a 'floating anchor' (Bordo, Klein and Silverman, 1998, p76); home is that space which provides those socio-spatial systems that, while not necessarily comforting or empowering, are, never-the-less, knowable and reliable. Thus, they focus upon their collective inability to

shape the kitchens of their childhood homes onto the contemporary maps they now draw, and find in this memory problem a testimony to the powerful bind between home and self :

> The missing kitchens, which set us on our exploration, led us to our parent's lives and the intimate imprints their absence and presence left on our psyches and bodies.
> (Bordo, Klien and Silverman, 1998, p74)

The physical space of the kitchen becomes a manifestation of their mother's agoraphobia; it contains and constrains the figure of their mother and, as it does so, serves to reinforce her disconnection from that which lies beyond it. The space of the kitchen, or the lack of memory of any kitchen, also holds within it the complexities of family, communal lives, feelings of integration and how they might work through experiences of dislocation, fragmentation and isolation. Within the problem of evoking the kitchen in home space, lies an exploration of the way in which their mother was close and connected to her children because of her limited mobility while at the same time being absent from them through her seeming stasis within such limited space. The kitchens of their childhood homes can therefore be understood to be spaces that are appreciated as being both a product of material relations and emotive imaginings.

This thesis is concerned with just such anchors. It adds to the work outlined above in that it understands those home spaces to be a series of symbolic and material relations around which senses of self-identity evolve. The analysis evokes a sense of the powerful ways in which home spaces provide shelter, security, pleasure, continuity and understanding but also, at times, confusion, distress and instability. The readings of home that I offer in the thesis are ones that are alert to the role given to home spaces in the construction of individuals' self-identity. Thus just as Bachelard and Heidegger ascribe great meaning to home and relate it to people's sense of self-identity, so too this thesis seeks to understand the binding of home with self.

2.2.4 Home, identity and ontological security

One of the means by which research has attempted to appreciate the social and emotional phenomenon of home is through using the concept of ontological security. It is possible to suggest the concept of ontological security, as it has appeared in housing studies literature, can be likened to the idea of orientation in that it draws on a sense of knowing and certainty that individuals can mobilise in their everyday lives (Saunders 1984, 1986, 1989, 1990; also see Dupuis & Thorns, 1998; Gurney 1991; Kearns et al, 2000). As I have already suggested, the phenomenon of home can be thought of as being one of the ways through which individuals – both singularly and collectively – orientate themselves and make meaning out of their surrounding relationships. The idea of ontological security that I wish to draw on here is, therefore, a sense of knowing one's self-identity; it is the ability an individual might have, at least on some level of consciousness, to recognise her/his self-identity and the relationships through which this self-identity emerges. Through the home, individuals can come to an understanding of the various relationships they have – with other individuals and with pervasive discourses – because the home provides a context in which the meaning of those relationships can appreciated, consolidated and/or contested. Indeed, as Douglas (1991) suggests, the home can be characterised as packaging for those relationships that people experience day to day and over the course of their lives. The packaging that home provides creates a framework – and potential surety of that the framework – around which people can hang the meaning they draw from their social and material relationships which in turn provides a kind of 'direction for existence' (Douglas, 1991, p290).

In engaging with ontological security, research on the home that appears in housing studies literature draws on Giddens' ideas of the project of the self and the role – and spaces - that he accords ontological security. Giddens' (1984, 1990, 1991) conception of ontological security is one that relates to a security of being; he describes the idea of being as one in which individuals have security in the continuity of their self-identity and of their relations with their social and material environment. The notion of being ontologically secure is therefore the

process by which individuals are able to position themselves, and their ongoing activities of everyday life, into compartments - or brackets - of intelligibility. These compartments in turn enable the establishment of a known order from what could be unbearable chaos. Giddens defines ontological security thus:

> Confidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity.
> (Giddens, 1984, p375)

> A sense of continuity and order in events.
> (Giddens, 1991, p243)

The challenge of modernity, according to Giddens, is that individuals find it increasing difficult to find spaces – both physical and social – in which to get some fix for the brackets of intelligibility that can lead to a state of ontological security.

This problem of space in which to realise a sense of ontological security is where housing studies and Giddens has been drawn together. Work done by Saunders (1984, 1986) on the home explores the possibilities that the home offers for the creation of ontological security. Responding to Giddens' concerns over the shrinking possibilities for ontological security in a modern world, Saunders sets his discussion of home upon the premise that a home provides a means through which individuals can realise a sense of ontological security. For Saunders (1984, 1986), the associations that people make between home, control, feeling at ease and safety suggests the home to be a space in which people have the room to work meaningfully with those relationships that provide ontological security. Implicit within Giddens' idea of ontological security is the role of trust; trust in relationships, trust in self and trust in the repeatability and reliability of material and social relations. Saunders creates a sense of home in which just such trust can be found; the material and social routines that make up the home are those in which individuals can therefore appreciate a sense of their self-identity and a security about who, what and where they are as individuals.

For Giddens, ontological security is central to continuing narratives of self-identity. It is the means by which people come to take things for granted; it allows for the development of a sense of what can be left in the background in narratives of self and what can be usefully foregrounded in order to extend narratives. By creating an element of order and certainty, ontological security facilitates varied social and material relationships because the fear an individual might have of not knowing, of losing sense of, her/his sense of self is held in place by the appreciation of the boundaries of that sense of self and the relations with others. More recent work within housing studies has considered just such this idea in a continued engagement with Giddens' writings on self and examination of what these might bring to an understanding of home. Dupuis and Thorns (1998), for example, examine the idea of ontological security in relation to housing in New Zealand and suggest that the network of routine that builds up – and is potentially passed between generations – through the home is closely associated with feelings of security. While they found a complex of articulation of home amongst their respondents, Dupuis and Thorn (1998) suggest that a home provides people with space in which they can live out routines and find comfort in those routines. This is not to suggest that ontological security means constancy or that homes provide continuous certainty. Indeed, studies of homes and housing which examine the disruption of home have also highlighted the link between home and ontological security (see for example, Fyfe & McKay, 2000 in relation to witness resettlement schemes; Nettleton & Burrows, 1998 in relation to health). As Kearns et al (2000) suggest, even in circumstances where home where be a tenuous thread, the ellipsis between home, security and comfort is strong and the certainty of self-identity that people locate within this ellipsis gives the idea of ontological security a continued pertinence within understandings of home.

Central in a number of the studies highlighted above is the idea of homeownership and the function that this particular form of tenure has within people's experiences of ontological security. He suggests that equating the idea of home with security of self-identity is intimately bound to the act of ownership

because it is through ownership that people feel able to emotionally invest sufficiently in their home to realise the stability it offers. Ownership, he suggests, is the means by which individuals can assert control over their material and social relations in such a way as to realise the boundaries that they put, or are put, around them. Such control and the security of self that it can engender is, Saunders suggests, to be found in the expressions of pride that homeowners often associate with their homes. It is as if Saunders suggests that pride can be understood as a cipher through which security is displayed or as a platform from which it can be asserted.

This conflation of ownership, pride and ontological security is not unproblematic. As Gurney (1999b) suggests, Saunders' (1989, 1990) work offers the basis from which to assert that people engaged with homeownership express a different set of feelings towards their home than those who rent and that in particular the sense in which people cite a pride of possession may change as tenure changes. However, to conclude that the pride in home expressed by those who own is the basis upon which ontological security is claimed is, as Gurney (1999b) suggests, a step too far. In part this is because it unnecessarily excludes those whose home is rented from such relationships that home spaces offer in ways that are not always helpful and can indeed be obstructive to an understanding of home (see Watson and Austerberry, 1986; Dovey, 1985; Wardborough, 1999). It is also problematic because Saunders suggests that the sense of pride, and the feelings of security that are contained within that pride, are experienced equally across the home owning household (see in particular his 1989 & 1990 accounts). Saunders therefore not only promotes homeownership above all other tenures when discussing the possibilities of ontological security but he also promotes the household as a single unit of experience. This is perhaps best seen in his discussions of emotional investment and security that form part of his overall dealings with the idea of ontological security. In this, he seeks to link feelings of warmth, family, intimacy, relaxation and freedom from work across the entire household. However, there is a growing consensus within studies of home that to consider the household as a single unit is not to recognise

the varied experience of home that change according to, for example, gender (see for example Bowlby, Gregory & McKie, 1997; Gurney, 1997; Hunt, 1989; Lloyd, 1981; Madigan, Munro & Smith, 1990). So, while Saunders opens up the possibilities of understanding the meaning of home and its association with senses of ontological security, it is important to take this association to new analytical spaces. To seek to understand the ways which home and self-identity are bound together it is important to consider the nuances of home that exist within any one house and household.

2.3 The gendered geographies of home

Thus far, I have suggested that this project is located within debates that understand the idea of home to be not only one of shelter but also about the investment, creation and mediation of the senses of self that an individual may have, be constrained by, or aspire to. It is situated within a discourse of home that recognises such spaces as sites in which senses of self-identity are created and sustained; the binding of home and identity is therefore understood through the binding of the material and the social that the home represents. What is also understood, however, is that to isolate home spaces from processes that occur outwith the home is to obscure the context that such processes and spaces provide and the whole range of forces acting upon any given experience of home. The home is not a neutral container within which each individual is accorded the same status, space, resources or control. It is a place in which dominant ideologies of gender, class, sexuality, race (and others) are re-configured and experienced by individuals in private ways, but in ways that serve to reinforce the public workings of those ideologies. As Madigan and Munro suggest:

> the definition of home ... still carries a heavy burden of ideological conformity. Ways of living are circumscribed by the moral prescriptions embodied in concepts of family, gender and social class.
> (Madigan and Munro, 1996, p4)

This research therefore conceives of home as a socio-spatial landscape that is simultaneously constructed, and experienced, in both public and private ways. It seeks to explore the ways in which the experience of home is a weaving of

personal expectations and of pervasive discourses of social categorisation, both of which act in, upon and through the material and social relations of home spaces. Such a critque of home and experiences of housing has, as Munro and Smith (1989) suggest, been concentrated upon issues of class (see for example, Saunders, 1990; Saunders and Williams, 1988). However, in this research I examine the juxtaposition of personal experiences and the public expectations of gender that the home creates and represents.

In their introduction to a special edition on women and home, Bowlby, Gregory and McKie (1997), for example, identify gender as key in the structuring and experience of home (also see McKie, Bowlby and Gregory, 1999). They highlight the need to problematise and challenge the assumption of a private-public divide in space, investing in the idea of home the workings of those structures that are often thought to stem from, and be acted out, beyond the home. In particular they focus upon the category of gender and seek to recognise and unpack the processes by which the socio-spatial configurations of gender are central to household dynamics, house design and constructions of home. Thus, they refute the simplistic imagery of home as a haven and a comfort, and discuss the series of complexities and contradictions that make up the patriarchal constructions of care and comfort that make up home spaces. They encourage further consideration of the persistent, and seemingly binding relationship between ideologies of home and ideologies of 'family life'; such things as the fear of domestic violence (Malos & Hague, 1997), the drudgery of housework (Cockburn, 1997; Luxton, 1997; VanEvery, 1997), the problems of displacement and loss (Giles, 1997; Gurney, 1997; Malos & Hague, 1997) are shown to be potential punctures of the mythology of home as a place to return to, relax in and recuperate through. As Bowlby, Gregory and McKie suggest:

> 'Media images and political discourse take it for granted that "a home" is something we all desire. However, the home is also a site for creation and operation of inequitable relations that can be expressed in psychological tensions and violence.' (1997, p343)

Together the papers urge for an understanding of home that is alert to the many layers that make up any one given experience of house and home. They argue that it is therefore insufficient to consider the homes that people create to be simply a result of architectural design, financial means, convenience or taste because, at all times, processes and structures such as gender are worked through the choices made, the aspirations held and the experience lived out in those homes. There is in these papers an alertness to the ways in which the many layers, of those many social and material relations that go to make up home spaces, are always involved in a process of overlapping and overlaying each other. In this way, the home spaces in which people dwell become more obviously part of the public world because those structures which home is meant to protect them from can be understood to be working through the home to which they escape. The notion of home that Bowlby, Gregory and McKie introduce is therefore similar to the 'quasi-private/quasi-public' spaces that Duncan (1996) understands homes to be and builds upon that sentiment expressed by Morris (1990, p2) that characterises home as 'the theatre of many aspects (both public and private) of the relationship between men and women'. Home spaces are therefore conceived of as spaces in which there is a reworking of categories such as gender, and a personal rewriting of the public expectations of what it is to be a woman.

2.3.1 Disaggregating the household

Consideration of the home is often done within the framework of the nuclear family (Allan, 1989; Madigan, Munro and Smith, 1990; Somerville and Knowles, 1992). In his examination of the family, Cheal (2002) conceives of the home as a space within which family members meet and interact with each other in ways that create a single unit known as the family. Allan and Crow (2001) highlight the ways in which the idea of family and the understanding of household are often aligned in popular discourse. They suggest this stems from the ongoing power in the ideology of the family that positions the nuclear family within a house where that household will make their home. Thus, despite an increasing recognition of the multiplicity of family form, there is still

considerable overlap in the way that analysis of households and families is conceived (also see Sommerville 1994). The implication of this is that while differing family structures maybe acknowledged, the household is often still seen as a single unit and consideration of the influences upon that unit are equally applied across every member of the household

However, as Bondi (1998) suggests, this focus upon the family home is constructed around an implicit domestic role for the female parent and a more 'public' role for the male parent. In order that this difference is illuminated and its implications more fully understood, it is necessary to disaggregate the household and the home so that individuals' experience can be recognised. Hunt (1989), for example, prefaces the account she gives of home life with discussion of the different social expectations and realities that act upon the men and women who made up the households that she studied. She discusses how roles within, and experiences of, home spaces was to a very large extent determined and distinguished by gender; prevailing expectations were that men sought work outwith of the home, contributing to the home's fabric in a financial way while women's engagement with home spaces were centred upon the idea and delivery of a domestic haven. Hunt (1989) suggests that for men the idea of home is one that involves rest and a space away from work, whereas for women the conception of home usually remains rooted within a certain domestic role and expectation. Of the many points of discussion that this raises, it is obvious there is a need to consider the household as made up in a variety of ways and experienced differently by different members of that given household. As Spain (1992) suggests, the fabric of homes and the relations that people have within them are different according to the expectation of socio-spatial roles that any individual might have because such expectations will construct not only the role but also the understanding or appreciation of that role that the given individual articulates.

Disaggregation of the household can occur along a number of lines – for example, age, race, disability – thus allowing for a closer consideration of the

particular experiences of home that co-exist within any one household. For the purposes of this study, consideration is given to the variety of experience that can be heard once women articulate their accounts of home and thus disaggregate the home along the lines of gender and gendered difference. This is in opposition to Saunders (1989, 1990) who claims that there is no discernible difference between the understandings and meanings of home that men and women articulate. He suggests that it is the process of ownership that has the most impact upon people's experience of home and is dismissive of the need to unpack the household further to discern nuances of meaning variation. Many, however, disagree with Saunders. As Darke (1996, 1994, 1989) writes, for example, there is a particular relationship between women and their homes; it is a relationship that is different to the one that a man might have to the same home as it is moved across the axes of enjoyment and resentment by forces that play out for women in ways that they do not for men. This particular interplay of public and private forces upon the experience of women are however silenced if the household is understood to be a single unit of experience and an unpacking of that household is required to better understand the differing stories that women tell of their homes.

Work done on privacy within homes offers a useful example of the need to consider the many individualised stories of home that can exist within one household. Munro and Madigan (1993), for example, highlight the contradictory experiences of the privacy that can come from one household living in a single home. They discuss how the idea of the individual and the family often become blurred within the home as people seek out and explain their experiences of privacy. Thus, Munro and Madigan suggest that people's discussions of privacy were often conducted through an understanding of family as unitary whole and were strongly influenced by an expectation that a family home is a space of the family and not the individual. However, by considering the experience of privacy – or indeed lack of privacy – that women described, Munro and Madigan demonstrate the need to consider the individual experiences of home that household members might have. In doing this, they

suggest that the ways individuals may sometimes prioritise other people's privacy before their own, may at times be frustrated at the lack of privacy they are afforded, and at others may experience guilt at claiming private time may vary across one household. Further to this, Munro and Madigan (1993) suggest that these differences are the result of specific socio-spatial relations that work for particular household members in particular, gendered, ways.

Hubbard (2000) also points to the problem of considering the household as a single unit and offers comment on the way in which this singularity is rooted within the ideology of the nuclear family. He draws out the contours of gendered and heterosexualised relations that are presupposed within the ideology of the family and shows how these often coincide with the boundaries around households and the walls of the family home. The home and the household, he suggests, has become popularly understood as the space within which the notion of the nuclear family is best placed and most fully realised. Thus while it may be that the nuclear family household is no longer so numerically dominant on the housing landscape, it is this framework around which experiences of home are understood to be constructed. It is, Hubbard suggests, geographers - and feminist geographers in particular - who have thus far offered the most insightful critique of the psycho-social constraints and experiences of home spaces. For as Hubbard suggests, it is in the work of feminist geographers that there is an unpacking of the intersections of gender and home that insists upon a disaggregation of the household in order that the multiplicity of experience within, and of, home spaces can be realised.

2.3.2 Making women at home

The linking of women and home, and the associated feminisation of domestic space, can be traced back to the separation of processes of production and those of reproduction. Davidoff and Hall (1987) suggest that the separation of public and private space that is in many ways taken for granted in the twentieth century can be understood as stemming from the removal of productive work from the domestic areas of those social landscapes constructed by the middle classes. The

construction of the middle class, they suggest, has been intimately linked with the construction of separate spheres of work and of home. Davidoff and Hall (1987) describe the processes by which the workplace became increasingly distanced from the home space and suggest that as this distance increased there emerged a corresponding distance between those spaces that were considered masculine and those that were characterised as feminine. Feminist geographers such as McDowell (1983, 1999), Mackenzie and Rose (1983) and Zelinsnky, Monk & Hanson (1982) also address this distinction, and unpack the ways in which such socio-spatial separations are informed by the patriarchal assumption, whereby processes and spaces of production are masculine and the spaces and systems of reproduction feminine ones. The consequences of this, they argue, is that familiar urban structures and separations are constructed around understandings of production as masculine and of reproduction as feminine and home based. With such structures in place, McDowell (1983) suggests that women were encouraged, and at times forced, to position themselves within the home both in terms of their physical movements and their social identification resulting in geographies of restriction and, as Hanson and Pratt (1995) suggest small, and home based, fields of geographical possibility.

Roberts (1991) suggests that defining the home as a separate space and sphere from those spaces dedicated to the productive processes of society - those associated with paid employment - can be linked to the devaluing of the work that goes on within homes. Within Roberts' discussions there is an understanding that the privileging of spaces of production over spaces of reproduction can be linked to the distancing of paid work from unpaid work and that this occupies a central role in the distancing of women from activities that are valued within capitalist societies. For many women in the 1800s and early 1900s such separations, and the devaluing of women's roles associated with this, meant that that they were excluded from the work place and their experience silenced. More recently, this has changed as women have increasingly asserted themselves in spaces of work. However, as Hochschild (1989) suggests, in her idea of the 'second shift', work which goes on within the home to maintain the

house and the household remains work that is thought of as women's work and is not fully recognised or valued.

Arguments such as Roberts' and Hochschild's suggest that the socio-spatial positioning of women within Western capitalist societies can be understood in terms of their relation to the home and, through the devaluing of this position, the obfuscation of the work that women do while at home. Welter (1966) discusses how such obfuscation has been facilitated by a discourse that affords cult like status to the ideals of domesticity. The cult of domesticity is rooted in the 1800s but, as England (1991) suggests, has proved to be persistent and in this persistence has perpetuated the idea that there is a 'cult of true womanhood'. Most notable amongst those who could be considered middle class – and as Roberts (1991) suggests exaggerated in Britain by the class segregation that is observable across urban landscapes of work and home – this ideal of womanhood expected women to be found at home engaged in pursuits of a domestic and feminine nature. They were constructed in opposition to men who were afforded mobility, robustness, assertiveness and the role of producer and provider and the ability to work. As a result England suggests that women were characterised and positioned as consumers of those products that brought nurturance to their homes:

> The housewives ... responsible for the upkeep of her detached single-family dwelling as a private, safe haven for the emotional well-being of her family, for reproducing the paid labour force, and for being an active private consumer of mass-produced goods and services in pursuit of an arcadian life-style away from the ravages and harsh reality of production.
> (England, 1991, p137)

In this discourse of domesticity there is an elision between the construction of domesticity and femininity in such a way that the two are fused and confused. As Hunt (1989) suggests, the identification of a woman with the materiality of her home became inextricably intertwined; women are increasingly understood to be the means by which a home was made and maintained as a haven into

which working men could escape, whether by means of actual housework undertaken or the management of housework tasks:

> ... as Mrs. Carter said: You never know who may come.' If someone should call and see the disorder, she has no doubt which family member will be held to have fallen short of her duty
> (Hunt, 1989, p69)

What Hunt's work implies is that women can be understood as tied within home spaces in a similar – and yet oppositional - manner to the tying of men to labour markets and spaces. Therefore, just as men become identified through the work that they undertake, so too are women. However, because much of their work occurs within the home and is related to the home's creation and upkeep, it is not understood to be 'work', rather it is inscribed upon them as a mark of their womanhood.

This is further realised in McDowell's use of the phrase 'angels of the home' (1999, p75). In evoking the idea of an angel, McDowell emphasises the inscription of a simultaneously naturalised and spiritual duty of care upon women that locates them within home spaces. In this construction, the home is understood to be a locus of love and nurture and the woman within the home is the keeper and dispenser of that love and nurture in the way that angels might be. In this well of love and nurture, McDowell draws out the popularly held view that the ideas of woman and home are mutually constitutive; without a home through which women could find expression for their form and function, they can be understood to be without meaning. Mertes (1992) also highlights the ways in which popular discourse overlaid the idea of home onto the idea of woman. Citing a US labour leader's speech at the turn of the twentieth century she suggests:

> I entertain with no doubt but that ... the wife will, apart from performing her natural household duties, perform that work which is most pleasurable for her, contributing to the beatifying of her home and surroundings.
> (Gompers quoted in Mertes, 1992, p66)

The two constructions, of woman and of home, can therefore be understood to be powerfully entwined with one another so that there is a mutuality to them.

Homes are understood to be those spaces in our material and social landscapes that offer the opportunity to receive care and this is justified by, and in turn is used to justify, the construction of women as angelic care givers who are central to the home and whose centre of focus is that home.

This intertwining of women and home is also evident in work done on the geographies of motherhood that have appeared in geographical literature over the last decade or so. For example, Kim England's (1996) discussion of the daily lives of mothers who work outside of the home contains within it a tension as the women move from home space to work space. In those households with children and dual incomes, it is the women who carried the responsibility, and the associated tensions, of getting themselves and the children ready for the day that lies outside of the home space. Expectations, and experiences, of the need to negotiate the responsibilities of childcare and paid work is felt most keenly by the women upon whom England bases her study and suggests that the ties these women have to their home spaces are greater then those experienced by their male partners. This is not to negate the possibility of individual – or indeed collectives of – women taking decisions that challenge these ties and cut across the mutuality of the idea of woman and of home (as Dyck, 1996 warns against) rather it is to highlight the problems of such a coupling that necessarily have to be worked with, or possibly against, in order that the challenge to the home based geographies of women can be made.

Running in and out of the discourses of motherhood and the geographies of women who mother – whether that mothering be of children or other individuals – are those patriarchal social and legislative structures that serve to naturalise the maternity of women within a particular framework of femininity which is placed at home. Such discourses serves to create a certain sanctity around the home within the boundaries of which those emotional and nurturing duties claimed to come naturally to women were dispensed with an amount of sacred reserve. As McDowell (1999) suggests:

> The home became an idealized centre for emotional life, where feelings that might be disguised elsewhere were allowed full rein. Thus the home was constructed as the locus of love, emotion and empathy, and the burdens of nurturing and caring for others were placed on the shoulders of women.
> (McDowell, 1999, p75)

Also involved in these series of constructions is an effective controlling force over where it is women should be and how it is that they should be seen to be behaving. As Davidoff and Hall (1987) discuss, the ellipsis of any displacement between women and home draws strongly on the perceived naturalness of women and the measures needed to be in place in order that such naturalness can be protected and controlled. They suggest that the problematic figure of a pregnant woman – a symbol of a female sexuality that was usually silenced – could not be encompassed into the world of work and so was positioned in the home as a means to keeping the work place free of associations with animalistic sexuality and naturalness. A woman's body thus became one that was contained within the confines of the home so that order could be realised over the separation of emotion and work and between the spaces of the rational mind and those spaces of the disordered body.

Such control can be seen as informing urban planning and the design of individual houses. Matrix (1984, also see Spain, 1992) argue that the design of housing commonly reflects the hierarchy of family ideology with the more public, and masculine, rooms of the house being at the front of the building. Those spaces associated with femininity, those in which the care of the family was carried out, were located to the rear of houses. Thus in Victorian housing, parlours were to the front of the house, the kitchens were to the back, and children were looked after upstairs. The distinction between rooms was of course, to some extent dependant on class however, as Lawrence (1987) shows efforts were still made to concentrate family routines at the rear of the house away from the scrutiny of the public gaze. Madigan and Munro (1991, also see Madigan, Munro and Smith, 1990) discuss how this model, of houses planned around the ideal of private, feminine domesticity, influenced housing design for years to come as the public parlour room at the front of the house remained a

feature of British housing into the mid 1900s. Even with the demise of the parlour room, Madigan and Munro suggest that the design of housing largely continues to reflect the ideology of the nuclear family and does little to challenge the differentiation between gendered roles within the family.

Women have therefore often been placed at home through the very design of the housing that they occupy because housing design has reflected and reinforced that differentiation in gender that overlays femininity and domesticity. Ahrentzen (1997) cites the need to challenge those housing arrangements that limit the scope and scale of women's mobility and visibility both within the home and beyond. She is critical of that architecture drawn around the singular notion of the family as a single unit of consumption showing how it fails to encompass within it the diversity of families and how it obscures the multiplicity of roles that women now play within and beyond their homes. Such a challenge to the way in which housing design positions women in particular ways in relation to, and in, their homes is bought to bear through Freidman's (1996) analysis of housing designed by women. Through consideration of the alternative design implemented in the building, Freidman (1996) highlights the ways in which housing usually reifies particular discourses of family and of gender such that women are placed in home. Further to this positioning at home, studies such as Sparke (1995), Lupton (1993), Buckley (1996) and Craik (1989) show that within the home, design is such that it concentrates women within those spaces of care and domestic labour such as the kitchen. As Buckley suggests: 'The hum of the kitchen reverberates across women's time-past, time-present, and time-future' (1996, p446).

2.3.3 The doing of housework

One of the features of the home that is often understood to link women to their home spaces is housework. Studies of housework consistently show a disparity in the distribution of household tasks between men and women; women are found on average to do about seventy percent of the work associated with the up keep of a home. Lennon and Rosenfield (1994) for example, found that women

report doing on average thirty-three hours of housework a week compared with the eighteen hours reported by men (also see for example, Presser, 1994; South & Spitze, 1994; Ward & Hetherington, 1993). This division is, as Baxter (1997) demonstrates, persistent and, contrary to expectation, has not noticeably altered with women's greater participation with waged work out with of the home. Women continue to carry the burden of domestic labour; not only do they carry out household tasks from cleaning to decoration and 'do-it-yourself' but also assume responsibility for the completion and standard of tasks that they do not directly do themselves.

Important in examinations of the relationship between women, home and housework is that work that is done to the house is not defined as work. As Delphy (1976) suggests:

> A 'normal' day's work is that of a person who does not have to do his own domestic work.
> (Delphy, 1976, p81)

There is then a detachment of the idea of work from the expression 'housework' that has been effectively used to support the continued disparity in the burden that housework creates for women. Related to McDowell's (1999) idea of the 'angel of the home' discussed above, the naturalness ascribed to women undertaking jobs that care for the home and the household has effectively been used to position women as those best placed to do housework. As Baxter (1992, 1993) suggests, the ideology of gendered difference is often cited by people when explaining and accounting for the amount of housework that is undertaken by the various members of the family. Thus, as Oakley (1974) claims, the patriarchal relations that serve to shape gender and gendered difference on wider or public scales of social life also act through relations in the home. The home, under such circumstances, effectively becomes a location of work for many women meaning that they commonly deal with the reality of the 'double shift' (Hochschild, 1989). The persistent characterisation of housework as 'women's work' also means that for many women their working day remains linked to the home in that they create and maintain the organisation of the house and household. As Delphy and Leonard (1992) suggest, women's time-budget plans

revolve around tasks associated with the home to a far greater extent than men's do; work for women often begins well before the work place is reached as many household tasks are fitted in before work begins.

Hanson and Pratt (1995) demonstrate the impact that such a focus has upon women's geographies in their study into women's work geographies. They found that women's working patterns were dominated by their links to home spaces. The impact of home based responsibilities were such that women were more likely to accept work closer to home than men; those with children were more likely to interrupt their working day to undertake childcare – either routinely or in an emergency; in households where both partners worked it was the male partner whose work was usually deemed to be the most important and was therefore supported by other household resources, such as a car. The overall result of this linking of women and home was, Hanson and Pratt conclude, that the initial linking of women with housework and domestic responsibilities lead to their linking in ways which restricted mobility across a series of social and spatial spheres. The housework that women were expected to fulfil therefore created geographies that were restricted to those home spaces that the women assumed care of.

Taking on the burden of housework can therefore be seen to be a powerful means by which women remain closely linked to the idea and experience of home. However, in many ways the questions surrounding the issues of housework and its restrictive effects have become finer grained than this link would imply. There has been a growing discussion of housework that addresses issues beyond the simple division and burden of tasks; for example, Dempsy (1997, also see Greenstein, 1996; Hawkins, Marshall & Meiners, 1995) considers the idea of fairness and of satisfaction with regard the distribution of housework within a household and found that many women's relationship to housework is a complex one in which they balance off feelings of frustration at the work they undertake with justifications of why it is that it is fair. Similarly, work done by Baxter and Western (1998) found that the idea of fairness tilted around a number

of different axes and stretched beyond the basic measurement of time spent on household tasks. They found for example, that the nature of the tasks undertaken by male members of the household was very influential in women's assessment of how fair the housework division was. Thus, if men undertook tasks that were clearly understood as 'woman's work' – such as the ironing for example – women would claim that the distribution of housework was fairer than in households where a more traditional division of roles was observed.

Baxter (2000) also suggests that it is important to recognise that while women continue to contribute greater time and energy to housework then men do, it is important to consider the outcome of studies that show not all women view this as unfair or necessarily restrictive. She suggests that it is crucial that analysis of the home and the work that goes on within it, does not undervalue the work that housework is; for many it is not always burdensome and for some women it is a source of fulfilment that should be recognised as such. Indeed, as Blair and Johnson (1992) suggest, for many women the work that goes into keeping their home clean and well serviced is part of the enjoyment of their home and while they may acknowledge that the distribution of tasks may be unfair they are never the less satisfied with that distribution. This, in some senses, supports Oakley's (1974) engagement with the paradox of housework; many women may find housework mindless, boring and sometimes unending but those same women often express a pleasure in taking care of the loved ones and in the clean and organised home that results from the work.

There is then a certain paradox that emerges in relation to housework and the impact that it has upon women's experiences of home. However, whether an imposition or a pleasure, the doing of housework holds a central place within an understanding of home and of women's relationship to that space. The doing of housework has very immediate effects upon the geographies of women, reflecting as it does the ideological lines of gendered difference and reinforcing the linking of woman and home. As such, it forms a central part of any consideration of women's experience of home spaces and can be used not only

as direct evidence of the particularities of women's experiences but also as daily metaphors for their understanding of what it is to be female and their relationships to those spaces that they call home.

2.3.4 Beyond home?

While women continue to be closely related to home and to carry the burden of domestic responsibility, feminists have long argued for the need to consider carefully the ways in which ideals that create this expectation may in reality be experienced by women in a variety of ways. Mackenzie (1988) for example, demonstrates how the everyday geographies of working-class women have always been at odds with the ideology of gendered separation into clearly defined public and private spheres. Work by Domosh and Seagar (2001) and Bondi and Domosh (1998) similarly demonstrates the ways in which women have, for a long time, experienced spaces and mobility beyond the home spaces that a dichotomous characterization of gender and space would position them within. The articles collected by Booth, Darke and Yeandle (1996), likewise show, in a more contemporary setting, the mapping of women's lives across the urban landscape. Such mapping demonstrates the ways in which women are to be found in a variety of spaces that extend far beyond the private spaces of the home. Within the many interconnections of gender and private/public landscapes contained within the collection, there lies the need to recognise the fractures that exist in those boundaries that separate women and men into private and public spaces respectively. For there is recognised in such accounts a fluidity in the relationship between women and urban spaces, and in this fluidity boundaries around that which was thought of as being feminine, and those spaces thought of as feminine, are challenged and reconstructed.

As researchers have increasingly engaged with the mobility of women across a variety of spaces they have challenged the ideals of gender that constructed the ideas such as 'angels of the home'. Work has challenged the seemingly simple dichotomies of woman-private and man-public showing the way that such things as class, age, dis/ability and race intersect with gender in order to create a

particular experience and mobility in relation to home space. Empirically based work that reconsiders that mapping of the feminine, and domestic on the urban landscape includes Bondi's (1998, 1999) work on processes of gentrification. In this work Bondi found that, in some instances, the intersections of gender and class working through the processes of gentrification led to a blurring of the demarcations of public and private spaces as spatial experiences were challenged and diffused. She shows how a process of domesticating public spaces has occurred; through the process of gentrification, and through women's involvement in this, the private comes to occupy public spaces in areas of domesticated commodification.

While simplistic separations of women and men can obscure the extent to which women occupy masculinised public spaces, this thesis is alert to the way in which the mobility of women across spaces is a complex negotiation of expectation and experience. As Dowling (1998b) suggests, the influence of discourses of gendered difference has impacted upon urban planning in ways that mean cutting across that difference can be difficult to do. Indeed, numbers of feminist geographers have demonstrated the difficulty with which women do assert themselves in space beyond the home. Studies concentrating on the materially important associations of women with the private sphere and men with the public have, for example, demonstrated the difficulties surrounding transportation for women (see for example Tivers, 1985, 1988). There are also studies, such as those into women's experiences of crime (for example, Pain, 1991; Valentine, 1992), which suggest that while women maybe more evident in public spaces the perceived relationship to crime is illustrative of the difficulty with which they are accommodated.

The narratives that emerge from women's experience of urban space can therefore be understood to be ones that are complex and in some senses contradictory. The positioning of women within the home is a powerful and persistent one and is based within a construction of femininity that draws on the ideals of love, nurture and domesticity. However, the experiences of women are

not directly overlaid onto this construction and it is important to be mindful of the ways in which women, either individually or collectively, break through this construction to claim spaces and roles that lie beyond the domestic and outside of dutiful caring. There is a need, therefore, to engage with the multifaceted nature of the narratives of home that women tell in order to better understand the ways in which the power of domestic discourses, and the challenges to this that women live out on a day-to-day basis, are played out in women's experiences.

2.4 Narratives of home/narratives of self

In order to examine the ideas of home as told by the women in this study, I evoke an understanding of home as a process or as a narrative; a process of home that is made up of a series of constructions and challenges to the gendered boundaries of home identified in the feminist literatures reviewed in this chapter. Conceiving of the home as a narrative, or series of narratives that are told at times through everyday activities, at other times in the memories people have of home, and at yet others through expectations, allows the home to be understood as an ongoing process. Thus the stories that are told in this thesis are represented and understood as a dynamic series of juxtapositions that overlap and overlay each other to create, and re-create a web, or mesh, of experiences that together make up a narrative of home. They are an extension of that idea of home that collects various moments of home in a collage. The representations of home that are made in the substantive chapters that follow therefore seek to further realise the way in which episodes, of which Gurney (1997) writes, work together in that they consider the ways in which people join up the various moments and spaces of experience into a web of narrative.

My use of narrative as a metaphor for conceiving and explaining experiences of home extends beyond the idea of home itself as I also evoke the idea of narrative when conceiving of the sense of self-identity that this thesis understands to be underpinning people's engagement with home spaces. Thus, just as the idea of home is one in which various strands of experiences, various stories, are drawn

together into a web of narrative that contains within it an understanding of the idea of home, so too an understanding of self-identity is understood to lie in the creation of webs of narrative. This understanding of self as an ongoing project is initially drawn from Giddens' ideas of self-identity and ontological security as it appears in housing studies research on the home and discussed earlier in this chapter. However, in this section I contest the linearity, and singularity of Giddens' project of self and offer instead the dynamic and flexible idea of a web of self, and of self-identity, developed by Morwenna Griffiths (1995). The discussion that follows therefore lays out an understanding of self-identity that contains within it a sense of movement and change; indeed I suggest that in Griffiths' metaphor of the web there is a dynamic conception of self-identity that can be held, altered and re-held. The idea of a narrative of self is, therefore, alert to the possibilities of a dynamic sense of self; a sense of self that ebbs and flows around the variety of experiences that a person encounters over her life course in a similar way to the varying and continuing relationship to the idea of home that she also encounters.

2.4.1 Giddens and the narrative of self-identity

In his account of self-identity, Giddens (1991) constructs a sense of self that is bound up in the processes of human knowing. It is a sense of knowing what particular actions or processes are being done, or undertaken, and why these are being done. It involves a continual engagement with the social and material circumstances in which an individual finds her/himself in order that a discernable boundary around the self can be created, realised and maintained. The project of self is therefore one that must be alert to the variety of experiences and subject positions that occur across social relations, times and places. Giddens (1991) suggests that alertness to, and engagement with, such variety can be appreciated as a person's biography of self-identity:

> Everyone is in some sense aware of the reflexive constitution of modern social activity and the implications it has for her or his life. Self-identity for us forms a *trajectory* across the different institutional settings of modernity over the *duree* of what used to be called the life cycle.
> (Giddens, 1991, p14)

Held within these processes of knowing, or of coming to know, is also an appreciation of the various scales of relation that the project of self is undertaken within and framed by. There is a need, Giddens (1991) suggests, to be mindful of the way that modernity not only places upon individuals certain structures into which they must – to a varying degree – fit, but also assumes the privileging – or perhaps this is possibly a burden – of self determination or control. He understands a need to simultaneously consider that which might be pervasive through, and across, societies alongside that which might be embodied within any given subject. Self-identity is therefore understood to be a process of appreciating factors and structures acting upon an individual and those acts that are within an individual.

In order that this process results in a meaningful engagement with the idea of self-identity and an appreciable or discernable narrative of that identity, Giddens (19991, 1984) accords the practice of reflexivity much importance. He suggests it is the practice of reflexivity that gives structure and knowing to our appreciation of our identity through the constant monitoring of behaviour, responses and circumstances that it involves. To be reflexive is to engage in reflection upon those situations and reactions that we find ourselves living in, and through, and to incorporate those reflections into subsequent situations and responses:

> 'Reflexivity' hence should be understood not merely as 'self-consciousness' but as the monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life. To be human is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons ... Thus it is useful to speak of reflexivity as grounded in the continuous monitoring of action which human beings display and expect others to display. (Giddens, 1984, p3)

In a way, the idea of reflexivity is bound, perhaps uncomfortably, to the idea of rationality and depends on rationalization; it would seem to be about knowing and being aware of any given action and reasons for that action. However, Giddens attempts to create a sense of reflexivity as a process, or a project, that is often in flux between those conscious and unconscious thoughts that underpin

ongoing, and indeed expectant, senses of self-identity. In this way rationality can be understood as the incorporation of some sense of history or memory – necessarily personalised, specific and partial – into any given instance in a biography of self-identity. It is within this idea of self-identity, being an ongoing and reflexive project, that there is a working of memory and of individualised history as being always made of the present rather then severed and separated into the past. That which was experienced in the past is lived out in that which is experienced in the present and is used as a means to monitor the sense made of the present; of the actions we choose to take; of the relations that we experience and of the sense of self-identity that we find therein.

The metaphor of narrative and biography are central to Giddens's (1991) discussions on the experience of self-identity as it is through these that he incorporates the possibilities of reflexivity and the dynamism that this necessitates. In particular, the idea of biography, and autobiography, is the means by which individuals can work and rework the past, those memories of prior experiences, into a meaningful engagement with the present. It is in the conscious construction of biography that a re-engagement and appropriation of what has been known through past events can occur, and the patterns or brackets of certainty that engender ontological security can be realised within an individual's own biography. This implicitly, and necessarily, means that contained within the metaphor of biographical narrative is the process of reflexivity; to engage with the idea of a narrativised project of self-identity is to engage with the active and integrative sense of reflection that is at the centre of that narrative.

However, while the dynamism and flexible cross/self-referencing that Giddens's evocation of a narrative of self-identity encompasses are helpful, his account of the biography of self is one that remains largely linear. There is a sense that, while the present might be about incorporating the past in order to unlock the future, there is a line along which individuals tread, albeit that they might have some control over where and what the line is. To stray off the line is perhaps to

stray away from the safety of ontological security; to encounter change and risk that is too great to be held within the narrative of self that has been embarked upon. Indeed the possibility of change is not accorded the same latitude as the possibilities of re-energising the past to make sense of the present. It is as if the notion of rationality that is uncomfortably included in the discussions brings itself to bear on the construction of any given narrative so that linearity comes to be understood as successful. There is left a sense that coherence of narrative and wholeness of narrative elide, and that in the process of merging obscure the sense that can be made of change and fragmentation. Thus, in seeking continuity of biography, the possibilities that lie within those discontinuities that most biographies encounter, seems to be lost.

2.4.2 Feminist narratives of self-identity

In her examination of the idea and theorising of self, Griffiths (1995) chooses the construct of a story in order to structure and explain that understanding of experience she is developing. The story works on two levels, as it is both that by which she develops her argument – an idea that I will return to in the methodology chapter - and a metaphor she uses to problematise those, previously patriarchal, understandings of self that have been used by philosophers. The challenging metaphor that Griffiths creates is one that appreciates stories to be those experiences, and such recounting of those experiences, through which individuals create meaning and realise meaningful sense of self. In this way she positions the very stories that people live, and tell of living, as central in the understanding and theorising of self that can be undertaken. It is challenging to that which precedes it – such as Giddens' working of self-identity - because, as Griffiths suggests, this is to place experience at the centre of both epistemology and methodology; it is to move against any, masculinist, assumptions of an authority gained through a separation of theory from experience.

An acknowledgement of the symbiotic relationship between experience (of self) and epistemology (of self) necessitates an appreciation of the multiplicity of

subject positions that can be held both by those who may be thought of as constituting the researched and those who are thought of as the researcher. However, this embracing of a multiple sense of self is difficult to encompass within a discourse that seeks to create a totalising, or monolithic, subject against which individuals are measured and to which they are bolted – even in separation and distancing from that subject. This difficulty, and the fractures that using narrative as a means to understanding self produces is, Griffiths suggests, where the power of story and narrative lies. The simultaneous holding and moving of self within any given story or narrative is the means by which the complexities of a self, or a series of self(s), can be realised. The ways in which narrative demands incorporation of person, event, and those spaces in which they can be found, and might move through, necessarily means that it becomes impossible to ignore the urgency of subjectivity and the politicised nature of any given subject position. In using narrativised personal experience to understand self-identity, Griffiths therefore offers the possibility of a deepened and more complex working of both the idea of self and a particular instance of self. It is within the complexities of narrative that the many contradictions and complements of any one given story of self can be most fully realised.

An understanding of self-identity as fragmented has been espoused by a number of feminist philosophers who suggest that the way to understand women's experiences of self within patriarchal relations is to work with the contradictions and multiplicities that women live with. As Flax (1993) suggests, it is in the fragments of experience that the mobile and multiple self can best be found. To search for a unitary articulation of self is, Flax suggests, to accept the relations of domination that stem from the workings of patriarchy and to ignore those experiences, understandings or narratives that seem in some ways not to 'fit'. Thus, sustained critiques of the intimate and embodied relations that run through an individual's sense of self are shadowed by a rational, and rationed, notion of self-identity. For Flax, it is embracing the many fractures, differences and contradictions that co-exist in a narrative of self-identity that holds the possibility for an emancipatory politics for women.

Grimshaw (1988) also calls for a working of the multiple fragments of self-identity. In her discussions, the only way to make sense of the narratives of self-identity that women articulate is to understand the ways in which that which they may reject as somehow irrational is nevertheless a strand of their narrative. Thus, she argues that women take onto themselves what they feel they should reject leading to a contradiction lying at the heart of the self-identity that they articulate at any time. The contradictions can be understood to make up the many strands of self-identity that in turn make up a complex web of accepted reason and difficult desires for that which is unreasonable. Grimshaw discusses this in relation to women's use, and enjoyment, of romantic fiction which is often times rejected because of the traditional representations of femininity, relationships and so on, and yet is still enjoyed and read by many women. What is important to Grimshaw is not to dismiss such contradictions; rather the point is to understand the complexity of them so that the webs of self-identity that women construct in the light of the patriarchal relations they have to negotiate can be understood.

This, I would suggest, is what creates space for the possibility of change and a lack of coherence within a narrative of self. It is the conception of self as a series of fragments that facilitates the creation of non-linear narratives that can, never the less, be appreciated as a whole, or to possess some appreciable continuity. Take, for example, the changes in body that a woman goes through over her life course: the processes of menstruation, conception, pregnancy, childbirth and menopause serve to fragment women's experience of themselves, and of their experience of other women, and yet the fragmented sense of self that such events can precipitate does not necessarily create an inability to see these fragments together, as symbiotic, as a collective and so on. Equally, the fragmented experience of home that women often experience over their life course creates a series of relations, emotions and geographies. As women move through experiencing home as a child, as a young person, as an individual, as part of a couple, as a parent there are strands of narrative that are created which articulate the understanding the women have of themselves within that home space.

However, as this thesis explores, holding these strands together offers the possibility of considering the multiplicity of narrative that creates a kind of coherence to the narrative of self-identity that is appreciated at any one time or in any one home space.

For Almond (1988), events such as childbirth and menopause create points of juncture at which many women will become aware of, and negotiate, new stories of self. She uses the idea of juncture in order to realise the collective, or ongoing, sense of narrative that can work across the experiences. The juncture is therefore not necessarily a fracture; rather it can be understood to hold fragments in a dynamic tension with each other that, in itself, creates a strand of narrative. In this way, an awareness of past, current or expected fragments of experience and understanding can co-exist within a narrative. The moments, or spaces, of juncture therefore serve as times or spaces in which the co-existence of fragments can be realised and understood, thus making for the possibility of a mesh of self-identity. Such junctures can therefore facilitate a realising of stories of self-identity that individuals fashion for themselves without loosing the possibilities of multiplicity the feminist philosophers call for.

Understanding the role that fragmentation plays in the creation and appreciation of self-identity not only offers the opportunity to consider change within a given individual's narrative of self-identity but also offers the potential for reading the balance of driving forces at work in that narrative. Benhabib (1992) is alert to the need to consider carefully the interaction of individual agency with pervasive expectations. She suggests that it is necessary to work with the intersubjective becoming of a narrative of self-identity; an appreciation of a narrative of self therefore stems from considering the instances of interaction - with other subjects and structures - that collect together in the narrative. As Benhabib suggests:

> Identity does not refer to my potential for choice alone, but to the actuality of my choices, namely to how I, as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape and fashion the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stands as my life's story ... the question becomes: how does this finite, embodied creature constitute into a

> coherent narrative those episodes of choice and limitation, agency and suffering, initiative and dependence?
> (Benhabib, 1992, p161)

Thus, Benhabib calls for readings self-identity that contain narratives of how subjects and structures are positioned in relation to each other over time and space. Within the narrative of interaction that Benhabib (1992) calls for, it is the points of change that become important; at the junctures between fragments of narrative, a space opens up in which there lie stories of the relationship between societal structures and individual agency and how it is that the narrative of self-identity might swing between the two. In this way, there is again a repositioning of experience centrally within theorising of self; it is only in the consideration of self as an intimate and personal narrative of choices and demands that we can encompass fully the navigation an individual undertakes in creating their narrative of self-identity.

2.4.3 Webs of Self-Identity

The fragmentary and often contradictory strands in an individual's narrative and the changes narratives of self-identity undergo are not easy to have an overall appreciation of. The balancing of structures that drive narratives in directions beyond the individual's control and a person's response to that, are not necessarily easy to hold within a project of self that is as linear as Giddens' ideas would suggest. In order to encompass this multiple and non-linear sense of narrative Griffith (1995) evokes the metaphor of a web alongside that of the narrativised story in order that the collection that is a narrative of self can potentially be seen together:

> Self-identity is to be understood as a kind of web, the construction of which is partly under guidance from the self, though not in its control. Thus it is marked by competing constraints and influences which overlap and fuse. The theory is one which affirms that the creation of identity is a collective affair in which each person has a valuable contribution to make ... each individual creates her own identity, although she is constrained by circumstances in doing so. Equally it is highly communalistic and political .. such plurality is the norm not the exception.
> (Griffiths, 1995, p93)

It is in the web of self-identity that Griffiths understands the complexities of self-identity to be best held and appreciated, for it is in a web that the interplay between the maker of the web and those/that which would seek to influence, constrain or encourage the maker can be seen at work:

> Their creations are constrained by the circumstances of their making but they bear the mark of the maker ... it is intricate, involved, interlaced, with each part entangled with the rest and dependent on it.
> (Griffiths, 1995, p2)

A spider's web is strong enough to bear its weight but is also able to encompass within it changes in direction and to accommodate these within the spaces in which it is being made. In this way the web can be understood to be simultaneously fragmented and yet whole; secure enough to house and feed the spider and also to withstand being altered; invisible to those that the spider encounters yet knowable to the spider who made it. In the midst of all the complexity and delicate intricacy of the web, Griffiths (1995) suggests a conceptualisation of self-identity that is alert to, and inclusive of such dimensions of life as emotion, interdependence, change and autonomy. It is a working understanding of self-identity that contains within it the potential for a blurring of the boundary between the personal subject - that might be considered to dwell within the narrative - and those factors and influences that might be considered to be outside of the narrative causing effects from beyond the boundaries of the web. In this sense it contributes to the feminist project of understanding the personal to be simultaneously private and public and of re-invigorating the embodied and intimate subject with a sense of the political.

But around what is this web of self-identity created? How is it that individuals come to have a sense of their identity and all its multiple manifestations? Griffiths (1995) suggests that it is an ongoing process of identification; a series of instances in which an individual sees, hears or feels a moment of linkage with, or to, a clearly defined group, a pervasive social structure or, as Griffiths suggests, an 'invisible college'. The creation of a biography of self, or a narrative of self-identity, circles around these moments of connections or of recognition,

threading its way through social circumstances, material circumstances, change and growth carrying the idea, and experience, of a person's self-identity along the threads that are created. This is not necessarily a directionless and free floating process however, and Griffiths introduces a number of axes, or parameters, around which the circles travel and about which each individual balances the choices that she/he makes as to the direction of their narrative or the shape of their web of self-identity.

These parameters are in many ways in opposition to each other and part of the journey of self is to work through what part the tensions between them play in each individual's experience of self-identity. Griffiths (1995) purports that processes of self-identification involve a continual balance between the connections of love and resistance, acceptance and rejection. This process of balancing creates a person's web of self-identity as she/he moves in some directions and turns away from others. Some connections or movements are simple to work through and lead to decisions that are comfortable; within these a person might confidently grow the web of identity– an example of this may be that connection which can be found with a group that follow that same hobby. However, there are some connections that are more complex and driven less by the individual and more by the 'colleges' with which they are deemed to have a connection. Griffiths herself discusses the problems she had with realising the complexities of being a woman, a physicist, a philosopher and a feminist. She describes her difficulties in knowing where the lines between them were, which she wished to step over in order to be accepted and loved, and those she wished to break in an act of resistance. Such decisions are not always easily resolved but are ongoing as each individual navigates her/his own narrative through the processes of self-identification and self-identity.

The metaphor of the web is of further use in understanding of self-identity because it creates threads across both time and space and in the process creates bridges across which the fragments of self-creation can be spun. A web is a structure that is cumulative and can encompass change within it in ways that

alters a narrative but does not cause it to be lost or disintegrate. The web therefore offers a way to realise coherence without necessarily creating, or referring to, totalising and singularly linear structures. It lies bare the weft and the warp of the narrative it creates and in so doing possesses a transparency that enables individuals to look across time and space that has been, is now and might be in the future. This, Griffiths (1995) suggests is important so that individuals can attain some sense of the authentic without having to adhere to rigid, pre-set story lines or having to be prepared to live in only that particular moment in time and space they might currently find themselves:

> The self may be experienced as feeling, acting and being, authentically, in the here and now. But there is no such 'here and now' for a self that is not a result of what has happened in the past – and what is expected in the future. It may be that we act authentically in the present, but, if so, that authentic, spontaneous, immediacy is in fact firmly rooted in time (and space), especially in past social interactions
> (Griffiths, 1995, p176)

In the weaving of a web of self-identity, it is therefore possible to exist in a state of becoming that neither ignores the impact of those structures individuals are positioned within, nor demands total control over the choices that a person might make. A web of self-identity can therefore be understood to create not only because the individual makes choices but also because of where, and when, it develops. Griffiths (1995) explains this further by referring to a web that women traditionally have made, the web of tapestry:

> At first sight, needlewomen seem free to create whatever web they fancy. A longer look shows that this impression is misleading. Webs are always made in a temporal and social context, and they get their meaning from that context. There are only some patterns available. Still, a needlewoman does have room for manoeuvre. The design of the finished article is not fixed prior to its making.
> (Griffiths, 1995, p178)

So any given web of self-identity is one that becomes and carries on becoming. New experiences overlap with old ones creating juxtapositions, or junctures, that in turn, offer up new choices. The decisions that are made in the light of these

new choices create new sections of the web and thus continues the process of becoming.

In this way the metaphor of the web also encompasses within it the latitude of foregrounding and backgrounding particular parts of a narrative at particular times and in particular places. If the web is a cumulative project it has the space for some parts of it to be ignored while also allowing for the, relative, luxury of dwelling for prolonged periods in other parts of it. Thus, parts of the web can be stretched over others in order to give comfort, counterfeit or for the purposes of coercion. It could also be suggested that this is a process in which people are more conscious of some parts of their narratives of self-identity than they are of others. Thinking of biographies being shaped into webs by a variety of influences opens up the possibility of some of those being invisible; people can therefore belong to a group of whose web of communal identity they are not fully aware. The movement of self that the metaphor of a web creates does however mean that at times this invisibility is lifted and a person comes to see and understand those communities, pervasive identities, to which she/he belongs. Thus as the project of self creation is continued, there is the possibility to discover parts of the web of self that have already been created – for example, and pertinently for this study, that of 'woman'.

2.5 Conclusion

Domosh (1998) claims the home to be a rich territory into which geographers can look for an understanding of the socio-spatial landscapes that people live both day-to-day and over the length of their life course. As feminist post-structuralists have challenged the boundaries between the public and the private areas of social and spatial life, the door of the home has pushed open and laid out for analysis material and social relations that have previously been hidden. The home is no longer simply thought of as time and space beyond the demands of work, but is recognised as a space in which boundaries between genders, generations and classes are made, contested and re-made. Within the home spaces that people occupy are held the meanings of family, gender and gendered

relations, work and rest, autonomy and control, security and continuity; they are infused into the fabric of the house in which households are made and as households live out those relations, the home comes to represent them. The homes that we dwell in are therefore necessarily a dynamic series of relations in which we seek security, in which we find limitations and restrictions, and to which we refer to in order to appreciate a sense of our past, our current and future selves. Such a dynamic, relational idea of home is the focus of this thesis.

Specifically, my research mobilises the literatures outlined in the preceding chapter in an attempt to tease out the way in which a group of women build, relate to, and hope for the home spaces in which they live. It considers the narratives of home related by a number of first-time homeowners living in Edinburgh, Scotland who were, at the beginning of the project, all under thirty-five, without children and employed in what could be considered as middle-class professions. The focus upon such a group is a deliberate one, and results from a number of considerations. First amongst these, is the context of women's changing access to employment and to independent homeownership. Ever increasing participation in paid work has meant that women have increasingly complex relationships with their homes and the ongoing negotiation of this complexity makes studies such as this still pertinent. The city of Edinburgh provides an interesting context in this regard as in the past decade the city has experienced a large growth in those financial and service sectors in which women are occupationally well represented. The impact of this changing landscape of employment is arguably felt most amongst those women who are middle-class as it is the middle-class who have traditionally maintained the strictest distinction between home space and work place. Examining the experience of women who are employed in middle-class professions therefore focuses upon a group whose relationship with the idea of home is undergoing a dramatic change from those that went before.

Concentrating upon women who are without children is also of note. Much of the previous work on women's changing relationship to home considers the

negotiations that women make within family settings where matters of child-care and family responsibilities have to be considered. Discourses of gender do powerfully interweave through discourses of home such that they are often understood to be places where women take their place within a family unit that includes children. What of women with no children? Are their relationships with home as contested and complex? Do they create alternate and resistant experiences of home that challenge the idea of the family home? In examining the way in which pervasive discourses of home and gender act upon women who do not have children and their experiences of home, this research goes some way to answering that question.

The third factor influencing my particular study is my appreciation of the ways in which points of change or juncture in a person's narrative of self-identity can often be moments when a variety of pervasive influences become clear. Moving into homeownership offers just such a moment of change, thus I have concentrated upon first-time homeowners. Through considering the change that ownership bought about for them, I hope to open out the various strands of discourse that the women understand to act upon their lives, both day-to-day and over their lifecourse. I deliberately do not focus upon women in the process of acquiring their first home as the particulars of house buying is not my interest. Rather, I focus upon women who are close enough to the experience of becoming a homeowner to remember the various changes that it created, while at the same time far enough away from the process to be able to consider the complexity and variety of those changes.

The decision to conceive of the homes the women tell of as being stories or narratives is also a deliberate one. I have argued in the above discussion that both the experience of home and self-identity is best understood as ongoing, multiple and changing and have, in this research, attempted to encompass that dynamism within the idea of narratives that evolve. The narratives of home that are told here are ones that work in a number of different ways, or draw on a number of differing strands that criss-cross each other. The women's stories

simultaneously move across space, time, relations and emotions as they interweave stories of past homes, work, expectations, partners and parents constantly creating and reflecting upon the stories' meanings. Thus, considering home as a narrative creates a space within which the ongoing experiences the women have of their homes can be evoked and examined. This represents an attempt to more fully realise the binding of self and home that the literature addressed in this chapter alludes to. The looseness of a narrative structure potentially facilitates an illumination of stories of self, stories of home and of the relationship between the two in ways that are sensitive to the many complexities of such stories. This approach to the study is different from that which has gone before in both a theoretical and, as I address in the next chapter, a methodological sense.

Chapter Three

Telling, listening to and retelling stories

3.1 Introduction

In her review of geographical research methods, McDowell (1992a) highlights an increasing interest in a reflexive set of knowledges and a growing alertness to the power relations creating them. She points to a co-incidence of interests between feminist, post-modern and post-structural theorists; she highlights their interest in the embedded and complex processes that create and maintain geographical knowledges and discourses, and suggests that it is these influences that have encouraged a greater self-reflexivity within geographical research. McDowell (1992a) suggests feminists in particular, have encouraged a questioning of the accepted, and seemingly unproblematic, ways of knowing, being and the researching of those ways, within geography. Questions that have come to the fore are ones that ask not only how geographers do research but also the ways in which geographical knowledges are created and accorded validity as ways of knowing that sustain research attention. As feminist discussions on the concept of gender and the processes of gender relations have become more entwined in some areas of geographical thinking, they have offered challenges to the unmarked, and masculinist, subject and practice of geography. As Pateman (1986) suggests of feminist work:

> Feminist theorists place themselves in an exposed position. Their arguments are as potentially subversive of conventionally radical theory, including marxism, as other theories ... To ask embarrassing questions about the relation between women and men, and to argue that sexual domination is central to, although unacknowledged in, modern social and political theory, is to

> touch on some emotions, interests and privileges very different from those disturbed by arguments about class.
> (Pateman, 1986, p1-2)

Feminist theorising has therefore encouraged a critique of the epistemological and methodological basis of research done within geography. The aim of this chapter is to consider this critique and to show how some of the challenges that are laid down by feminist discussions inform the method that has been adopted in this project. Firstly I consider the areas of social life and ways of knowing that feminist debates open up for research attention, showing how concentrating on experiences of women and of gendered relations bring into focus geographies that have previously been silent/silenced. Secondly, I will address the question of method; in particular I consider how the use of personal narratives in research might be considered a feminist method. I then outline the research design and reflect upon the methodological choices I made and the way in which these choices worked out. Finally in this chapter I consider the process of analysis that followed on from the data collection stages of the research and the journey coding and representation through which I travelled to create the story that has been written in this thesis.

3.2 Feminist research subjects and practices

Considering the impact of feminism on the research that is carried out within human geography, McDowell (1992a) broadly traces a two-pronged path. Along one lies observations about the subject of geographical research and along the other are comments on the approaches that inform the methods that have been implemented in feminist projects. Amongst her observations on the subject of research, McDowell (1992a) suggests that the introduction of women into research studies can be understood as an initial result of feminism's integration into areas of human geography. She suggests that the feminist work done within geography can be read as starting with an interest in 'women's topics'; for example consideration of the domestic arena, women's particular relationship to employment markets, and issues surrounding mothering and childcare. Such research, McDowell (1992a) suggests, can be seen as opening up a new scale of

experience and geography to academic and analytical thinking. Stanley and Wise (1993) concur, suggesting social science research that addresses the worlds of women is, in part, a corrective to the silences about women and their lives that have long been in research on social worlds and relations. As Smith (1987) and Devault (1990, 1994) argue there is a need to counter the consideration of only public, masculine categories of knowing and experience in order that the complexities surrounding the often ignored social lives of women can be better understood on their own terms. Feminist research topics can therefore be seen to support what Ribbens and Edwards (1998, p1) claim to be the importance of stepping out of the 'male-stream' of much social science research to consider the many worlds that women make, live through and aspire to.

These different, feminist, topics of research can be seen to position the domestic and everyday scale of experience centrally within research projects. As Kaplan Daniels (1975) suggests in her review of American feminist sociology, research that encompasses women necessarily has to take account of the two 'worlds' that women inhabit and know. She suggests that much research looks only at women's engagement with those social worlds that might be thought of as masculine and public and, that in such a focus, the importance of those worlds that women occupy at other times and in other spaces – usually domestic - is ignored. It is however the negotiation of these concurrent, but very different, worlds that makes the complexities of women's lives; as Hochschild (1989) demonstrates, it is the second, domestic, shift that women engage with that forms an important backdrop to much of their social relations and experiences. Similarly, Hanson and Pratt's (1995) study of women's work and home lives demonstrates the importance of considering the domestic responsibilities which women assume and the way in which these impact fundamentally upon their lives and geographies.

Feminist critiques of methodology have therefore opened up the spaces of domesticity to critical analysis; the home, as an institution that asserts powerful influence on women's geographies across a number of scales, has become a site

within which an understanding of those geographies can be found. In her work on the home as a site of geographical fieldwork, Oberhauser (1997) suggests that going into the home to do research is in itself an acknowledgement of the importance of everyday geographies and those domestic scenes that have so often been marginalized. She shows how research done in the home necessitates a politicisation of homely relationships in order that the gender dynamics of those relationships can be seen and considered. To research in the home is therefore to prioritise domestic lives and knowledges that are often obscured by discourses such as 'home is where the heart is' and 'a home is a man's castle'; it demands negotiation of the power relations working within a home and the impact these have upon the geographies of those who live within that home. As Oberhauser (1997, also see Gilbert, 1994) suggests, in research on/in homes the household becomes a strategic and politically created space through which women – also men and children – realise the socio-spatial variety, and limitations, to their subjectivities and geographies.

Apthekar (1989) also urges a focus upon the everyday scale of social life. She suggests that it is through the inclusion of those everyday activities that are often considered mundane and banal that there is a better understanding of the many ways of knowing that people engage with on a daily basis. She writes of the importance of the everyday as the underpinning of meanings that people mobilise across a variety of scales of relation, seeking a way of understanding that embraces that which people most routinely know and do. She suggests:

> The point is not to describe every aspect of daily life or to represent a schedule of priorities in which some activities are more important or accorded more status than others. The point is to suggest a way of knowing from the meanings women give to their labours. The search for dailiness is a method of work that allows us to take the patterns women create and the meanings women invent and learn from them. If we map out what we learn, connecting one meaning or invention to another, we begin to lay out a different way of seeing reality.
> (Apthekar, 1989, p43-4)

Thus, Apthekar suggests that the everydayness of people's worlds and lives, and of women's lives in particular, can be understood as a representation of process –

or indeed a series of processes – that offers a means of collecting and considering those worlds and lives. To work with life at a scale which has been previously marginalized within academic research is, Apthekar claims, a route to finding potentially new ways of understanding the meanings that people create for themselves from the many daily and small scale interactions that they engage in and that serve to structure their geographies.

Feminist interventions have also demanded a re-evaluation of the place of experience and experiential accounts within the research process. This is in many ways to urge a departure from an epistemological basis for research that objectifies the subject in an attempt to render distant and neutral that which is being studied. It is to conceive of those people who we research as subjects; they are subjects who have ownership over the complexities of the experience they represent and as such are involved in a collaborative process of research. As Stanely and Wise (1993) suggest, within a framework of research that claims to be feminist methodologically, it is a contradiction to ignore the subjectivity of those being researched. A reinvesting in the subjectivity of people and in their subjective experiences is, therefore, a reinvestment in those who are researched as people, rather than, as England (1994, p82) terms it, 'mines of information to be exploited'. Such a privileging of subjectivity is, Armstrong and Du Plessis (1998) suggest, an explicitly feminist challenge to those epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies of the academy; it accords a position to experiential ways of knowing that cuts across the traditional oppositional relationship with theory to make them commensurable.

It is in many ways also an investment in the personal within research. Domosh (1997) writes of the value that the personal bought to her engagement with theoretical argument, claiming that held within personal stories are those everyday encounters that speak of the transfers of power inscribed onto people's lives and geographies. Such a weaving of the personal with the theoretical can be seen in various ways in work done on gendered geographies, and speaks of the powerful testimony that lies within those individualised stories of personal

experience so often overlooked by the search for 'grand' narratives. Lawson (1995a, 1995b), for example, discusses the value of positioning the personal as central in research on women's experiences of economic austerity. She claims that in using the personal experiences told of by the women she researched, the account she creates of their coping with economic hardship recognises in a more nuanced, and potentially empowering way, their active stances and interventions into the economic situation. In these personal accounts, therefore, there is not only a specific experience, but an integrated understanding of the gendered nature of economic hardship that enables the represented women to be more than passive participants – both in the localised economic activity and the research. In such work there is, therefore, a validation of the experiential and the personal in their own right, rather than validation through abstracting knowledges from their subjective creation in order that they be theoretical.

Griffiths (1995) calls for just such an engagement with those personalized stories that are created through the research process. She suggests that it is in the experiences that we have that connections and understandings can be made and appreciated. For Griffiths (1995), writers such as bell hooks and Patricia Williams - who seek to make their own experiences research - do so with the intent of offering particular accounts of pervasive discourses that, in their very particularity, hold meaning which theory alone cannot convey. It is, of course a complex process; that which is personal and anecdotal is always in flux, constantly interacting with public discourses that themselves are in flux, and as such has to encompass within it the possibility of considerable change and revision. This is a challenge to the certainty and reliability that is often accorded to more traditional and masculinist epistemologies, however, it is one in which there lies the possible recognition of the many intersections and variety of experience that makes up the subject of research. It is, Griffiths (1995) suggest, in many ways, crucial to the overall growth of feminist work because within this engagement with personal experience and anecdote lies the workings of gender and class and race and so on. It can be understood, therefore, as a continuation

of that movement away from writing the geographies of women into geography of a writing of the many processes of gendered geographies.

Working with personal, subjective and situated knowledges does, however, require careful consideration of how knowledges that are considered as marginal are transferred to positions of centrality that speak as a whole. Edwards and Ribbens (1998) claim that such work is always 'betwixt and between'; they conceive of personal, and often private, accounts as oscillating between the personally known and the theoretically classified in ways that can be difficult to manage. There is an inevitable tension as that which is personal is moved away from the person - to whom it is personal - and taken into a space that is more public and collective. In this movement, feminist methodologies are at all times eschewing the comforting order that academic theory attempts to place upon the experiences that people know and understand. As Miller (1998) suggests, the fractured and multiple reality of people's personal experiences do not readily resemble that model of research that easily assumes an order and rationale. There is a need to move and flex around the multiplicity of experience that may inform any one piece of research so that the work can speak of both the intricacies of subjectivity and allows those intricacies to speak of collective stories. As Rich (1986) suggests, it is within the personally known stories that the many colours of a story can be found:

> I believe increasingly that only the willingness to share private and sometimes painful experience can enable women to create a collective description of the world which will be truly ours.
> (Rich, 1986, p16).

Issues such as the collection, movement and theoretically engaged use of the personalized and everyday stories that make up much of feminist work have also led feminist researchers to question the methods adopted in research. McDowell (1992a) suggests that work on women has a tradition of adopting a qualitative and intensive approach. She suggests that this, on one level, stems from the fact that very few statistics about women's lives have been available; work surrounding housing and the home is a good example of this, as women tend to

become invisible in such statistical analysis, hidden behind the, assumed male, 'head of the household'. Feminist research has therefore sought to examine the experiences of women, and the gendered processes through which those experiences are created, through methods that are more ethnographic and person centred. As the special issue of Canadian Geographer, 'Feminism as Method in Geography' (1993), suggests, it is through the adoption of more ethnographically orientated methods that feminist researchers have attempted to create spaces which hold both the dissidences and commonalities that are the complexities of women's ways of knowing and being.

It is also in such methods that feminists have found the opportunity to challenge the boundaries between subjective research knowledges and knowledge of a research object. As Gilbert (1994, also see Nast 1994) suggests, feminist social scientists have been intent on finding methods of research that realise the ways in which women who participate in research have authority over, and ownership of, those everyday ways of knowing and being of which they tell. Therefore, as Moss (1993) suggests, to engage with feminist methodology and method is to seek spaces and places in which the traditionally scientific and masculinist boundaries between the 'knower' and what becomes known, is challenged and reclaimed as a collaborative result of the interaction between the researcher's and researched's subjectivities. Devault (1990) characterises this challenge in the following way:

> Feminist methods as distinctive approaches to subverting the established procedures of disciplinary practice tied to the agendas of the powerful
> (Devault, 1990, p96)

In this way the research process can be understood to be a process and result of what England (1994) terms 'intersubjectivitiy' and what Smith (1993) suggests is 'collaborative research subjectivities'. In such an approach to research the position of the researcher in relation to the researched is potentially subverted with the researcher acknowledging, indeed seeking, the expertise of the researched and working sensitively to retell the experiences that are shared through the research process.

The concept of collaborative subjectivities allows for a rethinking of those power differentials which feminist work seeks to challenge. It steps out of the hierarchies that inform research practices and makes an analytical space in which the webs of shared and mutually created meaning that evolve can be heard and understood. As Mishler (1986) argues, any 'story' that is created during the course of research is necessarily a joint production in that both the researched and the researcher are actively engaged in creating the context and content of the research. In working with collaborative subjectivites, Smith (1993) suggests that the distance between the researcher and the researched is made apparent and can be reduced because there is an understanding of both parties in the research giving and receiving. There can be no fixed subject positions within such a framework because there is constant movement around instances of subjectivity in order that the web of shared, personal meaning can be realised. What this offers is many spaces in which representations of experiences can be made; the experience being told of, the experience being had and the experiences that are to come

3.3 Using personal narratives and stories

In order to work with these oscillations between the personal and the theoretical and the multiplicity of these movements, this project makes use of narratives as a process of, and metaphor for, evoking experiences, collecting stories and storing these in the form of data. Brodkin Sacks (1988, 1989) highlights the possibilities that lie within the use of narrative and story telling/collecting when considering the complexities of people's social worlds: it is, she suggests, in the collection of life stories that the unities and connections between events and concepts can be seen. Through the use of life stories and personal narrative Brodkin Sacks shows how the processes of telling, collecting and retelling stories were, in a dialectical way the processes of broader social and historical, and I would suggest equally geographical analysis (see Moss, 2002).

The choice of personal narratives as a means of collecting data for this project was very much informed by the metaphor of narrative evoked by Morwenna

Griffiths (1995), and discussed in chapter two. In seeking to understand senses of self- identity through the metaphor of a web, Griffiths (1995) empowers the idea of a story or narrative of self as the means by which people understand the many subject positions they make, experience, challenge and so on. She suggests that in telling a story of self-identity the many aspects of that self-identity become visible and can be appreciated as a dynamic and interconnected - although not necessarily rational - series of junctures in experience. It is, Griffiths (1995) suggests, the connections between these spaces and moments of juncture that make up the web of self-identity that people can come to identify with or through. The biographical or personal narrative, Griffiths (1995) suggests, is however not only one that has meaning for the subject of the biography but is also the means by which others may come to know of that biography. Thus, Griffiths puts forward the possibilities of biographical stories as methodology, pointing to the potential that they have of constructing an epistemology based in multiplicity and the inclusion of experiential difference.

For Griffiths (1995) the use of biographical narratives as a methodological means to explore ideas and experiences of self-identity is to work with an experiential and dynamic epistemology. It is to bring closer together that which is lived and that which is theory in an understanding of biography that cuts across time, space, subject position and authorial voice to speak of theory and experience as one. She suggests an approach of 'critical autobiography', defining it as:

> Making use of individual experience, theory and a process of reflection and re-thinking, which includes attention to politically situated perspectives.
> (Griffiths, 1995, p68)

Thus, the stories of self-identity that Griffiths (1995) argues for are ones that are personal, individual and ones in which the particular is understood as simultaneously working with the pervasive and political. They are stories that infuse the idea of epistemology and 'critical' knowledges with a politicised subjectivity and accord a central position to personal experience (also see Jamieson, 1998; Ricoeur, 1991).

Biographical research narratives are also ones in which Griffiths (1995) understands there to be room to reflect, to use theory, to appreciate a multiplicity of subject positions and to encompass the flowing of experience back and fore between the various subjects involved in the telling of, and listening to, the story. In this sense they are also characterised as webs; the narratives that Griffiths (1995) seeks to understand self-identity through are such that they allow for mobility across time and space while also being able to encompass the possibility of fixity of events, emotions, relations and so on. The web is able to hold within it many strands, many reflections, the intersections of experience and theory and the complexities that might arise from this. Therefore, the conception of biographical narratives that Griffiths (1995) evokes is one that contains the many interwoven layers that go to make up experiences of self-identity and offers the possibility of commenting upon those experiences in ways that have meaning beyond the particular circumstance of any one given story.

Margaret Somers (1994) argues for an evoking of narrative in research methodology and method, suggesting that it offers the possibility of engaging with the way that lives are storied. She suggests that we embed experience within the stories that we tell; those stories that we share with friends, keep to ourselves, or indeed offer in response to research questions, are stories that hold in them the lives that we live. For Somers, narratives can therefore be conceived of the means through which experience is made, re-made as it is (re)presented, and understood. Stories become the means by which we articulate understandings of our relations, our geographies and ourselves; as Benhabib (1992, also see Benstock, 1988; Moore, 1994) suggests, we create both character and assume control of that character through these narrativised articulations as within them lie the realisation of possible identities and relationships. Somers (1994) claims the power of narrative lies in the idea that they are the way we construct experience; that which is represented through narratives of experience is, as she terms it, 'emplotted stories' woven around not only specific events but also around such pervasive discourses as class, gender, sexuality and so on and in this weaving lies an important rendering of a condition of living.

Mbilinyi (1989), in her discussion of collecting personal narratives, suggests that the stories in her research are ones in which individuals are able to tell of both that which is personal and private, while also speaking of that which is public and pervasive. In this way Mbiliyni (1989) suggests that engaging with personal narratives allows research to hold within it not only the particularity of experience, but also the collective descriptions that Rich (1986) writes of. In the personal narratives of Tanazian women collected in her research, Mblinyi (1989) perceives both the local and specific experience of which the women speak – their home lives, their bodily experiences and so on – while also hearing the ways in which these experiences are permeated, or moulded, by more pervasive and public discourses of gender. There is, therefore, interconnectivity in the idea of personal narratives that can be effective in negotiating the potentially complex and sensitive relationships that lie between the private and the public. As the narratives are developed, Mbilinyi (1989) understands that the webs of experiences being created do in some part make the bridge across which the private travels in order that it speak of something more public. It is therefore the embedded stories that cut across the boundaries of research, simultaneously speaking of the private and the public, melding them together in ways that begin to eschew the hierarchies that a project such as this one seeks to move across.

Plummer (1995) also suggests the potential that lies within the use of narratives in social research. Plummer suggests that working through narrative structures enables us to appreciate maps of experience; these maps, he suggests, contain, and display, the interwoven ways in which people know and understand those experiences of which they tell. He suggests:

> Whatever else a story is, it is not simply the lived life. It speaks all around the life: it provides routes into a life, lays down maps for lives to follow, suggest links between a life and the culture.
> (Plummer, 1995, p168, original emphasis)

Thus, the stories that people tell can be understood as working in many directions, on many scales, in many places and as linking into many discourses. To create and reflect upon a narrative is, Plummer (1995) suggests, to consider the ways in which people weave the complexities of their social worlds; it is a

means to seeing the juxtapositions and intersections that occur within any given story, or set of stories, and to appreciate how they mix together. Of course what is of importance here is that these complexities are not necessarily extraordinary but speak through the most everyday of events and circumstances, those events that might be considered to be of little public importance. So, as Passerini (1989) suggests, personal narratives offer maps of profound meaning while allowing those who tell the stories to express themselves in turn through the banal, the mythic, the funny, the frivolous and at times the deeply felt.

Stanford Friedman (1998) also discusses the use of narratives as a means to research social lives. She suggests, in a similar way to Somers (1994), that narratives can be understood as the discursive practice through which experience is framed and articulated. Thus she argues for a conceiving of narratives as dynamic constructions that simultaneously make experience as they make a representation of that experience. Stanford Friedman (1998) therefore infuses the idea of narrative with a movement that encompasses the possibility of continuing experience and meaning: stories can grow, change, contradict themselves, stop suddenly, overlay previous stories and so on. Narratives offer the possibility for those telling stories about their lives to rework those lives as they make and tell the story. Such a dynamic form is important in realising the flux that is subjectivity; as Court and Court (1998) suggest:

> An individual's subjectivity is understood as always in process. That is, rather than being unified and fixed for life, a person's subjectivity shifts and changes as she encounters new discourse, has new experiences, and takes up different ways of being. Subjectivity is also multiple and fragmented within a particular moment .... This kind of multiplicity can mean that an individual's subjectivity may be marked by conflict and contradiction as she negotiates the differing positions and meaning available to her.
> (Court & Court, 1998, p128)

Court and Court (1998) also suggest that it is in the use of narratives that this change and contradiction can be seen and understood. It is the threads of narrative being strung together that hold the movement between various positions and allow for an appreciation of how the movement was made; as Birch (1998) suggests, life stories inform and represent a sense of self-identity that

is at all times negotiable and therefore able to contain within it multiplicity. Such an appreciation is, Court and Court (1998) suggest not only possible for those reading the story but also those who live and make it. It is in this sense that Stanford Friedman (1995) suggests that they are a means to negotiating the discursive practices of representation within research in potentially fruitful, and emancipatory, ways.

The possibilities of discursive representations and emancipatory forms of telling a personal story are, I suggest, representative of the ways in which the use of personal narratives can be understood to be adopting a feminist methodology. The metaphor of narrative can, as has already been suggested, hold within it multiplicity but it also lays open the multiple exchanges that occur within the research process. As Hale (1991, also see Maynard 1994) suggests, the idea of a feminist methodology is one that is alert to the many layers of experience, theory and relationship that make up the research. These layers are actively recognised within personal narratives as it is in their interaction that the story comes to have and maintain its meaning. I would suggest, therefore, that in personal narratives there is not only product but also an active and constant sense of the process engaged in to also create that product. They offer comment on the process of research on two levels; firstly they can keep visible the collaborative nature of the stories that are created between the researcher and the researched while also bearing the personal mark of the woman who is primary in creating the narrative. As Griffiths (1995) suggests, the metaphor of narrativised webs of identity is that they represent both the space in which they are made and the mark of the maker. Thus they are a potentially useful way of realising the feminist aim of positioning marginalized subjectivities as central in research whilst also being alert to the ways in which those subjectivities are specifically produced through the particular research moment in which they are created.

3.4 Research design: collecting stories

In order to collect personal narratives and stories of home, I carried out a series of repeat in-depth interviews with six women. In many ways the choice to

conduct in-depth interviews is not a surprising one: my work is a qualitative project and using interviews to collect qualitative data is a tried and tested method (Fielding and Thomas, 2001; Kitchen and Tate, 2000; Mason, 1996; Silverman, 2000). The in-depth interview has also become somewhat established in feminist research as the method of choice to consider women's experiences. Often used by feminist researchers, the process of interviewing is not in itself inherently feminist however; as Dyck (1993) suggests, it is the way in which the feminist critiques of knowledge and research have been used to inform the approach to interviewing that leads many to adopt it within feminist work. Oakley (1981), for example, discusses the possibilities that lie within interviewing as method, suggesting that interviews offer a challenge to feminist objections to masculinist – distant, objective, rational - methodology. It is the interview, Oakley suggests, that allows the collaborative and interactive process of research to be most fully realised, acted upon and acknowledged (also see Smith, 1993). It is a research space in which there can be a sense of exchange between research subjects – those being the interviewer and interviewee – rather than a one-way exploration of one by the other.

A number of feminists argue the benefits to be found in interviews where women interview women; such arguments suggest that the research relationships, and resultant knowledges, involved in such research are likely to be non-exploitative and non-hierarchical and also the most rewarding (see for example Berger Gluck and Patai, 1991; Devault, 1990; Opie, 1992; Reay, 1996). Berger Gluck and Patai (1991) suggest that through the complex, but sympathetic, negotiation of position and relationship that occurs in situations where women interview women, the complexity of women's lives can be better illuminated. They suggest that because women who interview live lives that are shot through with some of the same complexities as the women who they are interviewing, there is honesty in the exchange that might not otherwise emerge. Thus, the importance and multiplicity of women's lives can be explored more fully in situations where such multiplicity is known and lived equally across those involved in an interview.

Such claims are not unproblematic however, and, while citing the empathy as constructive in the interviewing, it is it important to be mindful of the ways in which an assumption of similarity can obscure important differences (see for example discussions by England, 1994; Finch, 1984; Gilbert, 1994; Herod, 1993; Patai, 1991). As Patai (1991) suggests, to assume that feminist methodological concerns can be solely met through women doing research with women is to ignore the ongoing debate into the many constructions and experiences of gender and of 'woman':

> (feminist research) may in its own way be just as ill advised. For in a world divided by race, ethnicity, and class, the purported solidarity of female identity is in many ways a fraud.
> (Patai, 1991, p144)

It is therefore important to have an appreciation of not only the possibilities of similarity but also the differences that lies between the subjects involved. It is, as Miller and Glassner (1997) suggest, a case of being alert to both the 'insider' and 'outsider' status that I, as a female feminist researcher, have in interview situations (also see Mohammad, 2001; McDowell, 1992b). The complexities of this notwithstanding (I reflect on the realities of these in the following sections), carrying out in-depth interviews offered me the opportunity to collect those rich stories of women's lives that make feminist, qualitative research rewarding. I understood that within the interview there lies the potential space for the complexity, ambiguity, and contradictions of peoples' experiences, but also for the mutuality and sharing that can create an intimacy in the resulting research knowledges.

Appreciating the possibilities of interviewing was one thing, however the prospect of making them work for me, in my research, was quite another. As I have suggested elsewhere (Avis, 2002), the prospect of carrying out interviews was an extremely daunting one. I was concerned about almost every aspect of the interview process: recruiting, creating research relationships that were respectful and profitable, initiating and then sustaining conversation represent but a few of my worries. In order to try and work through some of my worries I carried out a number of pilot interviews with friends who were of the same socio-

economic demographic as the women I focus on in this research. An established part of the research process, piloting is often cited as being the means to practising, initially testing and clarifying the key ideas and strategies involved in a project (Kitchen and Tate, 2000; Maxwell, 1996). Piloting can also be useful means by which a researcher familiarises herself with the 'doing' of interviews. As Valentine (2001) suggests, pilot interviews offer the chance to practice different modes of introduction, to get used to using a tape recorder and/or making notes and to become more acquainted with the various rhythms of research conversations. This was, for me, the value of my pilot interviews and conducting them with friends meant that my interviewees would be forgiving of my faltering stammers as I tried on the role of researcher. Thus, the piloting part of my project made me consider the intricate negotiations involved in interviewing and offered me a chance to gain confidence that I would be up to the challenge of managing those negotiations.

Once into the research 'proper', and in order to maximise the potential of my interviews, I conducted interviews that were as unstructured as possible, adopting an informal, conversational approach to them. I would arrive at interviews with a broad sense of what it was I was interested in talking about, but would introduce these gradually, preferring to allow the conversation to develop, at least in part, along the lines that the woman being interviewed chose (see Cresswell, 1998). My hope was, that through carrying out interviews in which the women were able to steer the conversation, the resulting data would better represent the events and structures by which the women understand their own narratives of home and self-identity. I also felt that carrying out all of the interviews in the women's homes gave the women a chance to assert themselves more easily upon the interview conversations and topics. The women made decisions about which room we would be in, how we would sit, whether to have a drink or not and so on, and as such took control over, at least some, of the ways in which interviews were framed. The webs of experience that the women created were largely shaped by them, and the strands that looped particular instances or thoughts together were, likewise, largely directed by them from

within their home environment. This is not to suggest that the interviews were not also influenced by my research agenda, or by the particular interjections I made at given moments, but the choice to carry out unstructured interviews was an attempt to maintain the value of experience in the light of academic theory. Such recognition necessitated an approach to interviewing that worked with the women as experts of their own experience and this, I felt, was best achieved within a research design that created maximum amount of space for the women to think and talk (also see Mies, 1993; Parr, 1998). Having a conversational nature, the interviews had such space: the women were able to tell of the seemingly mundane; what they thought of as intimate; abstract ideas they thought impacted on them; what they hoped for; what had been; and what was changing in their lives (see Miles and Crush, 1993).

This desire to elicit complex accounts of the experience and understanding, also led me to carry out repeat interviews. It is not uncommon for qualitative researchers to interview more than once; as Rice and Ezzy (1999) suggest, repeat interviews can create an atmosphere and relationship that brings to the fore those 'private' accounts of experience that do not surface in a one-off situation. Constructing narratives of experience can also take time and with this in mind, I decided to interview each of the women four times – although one women was interviewed only three times for reasons that will become clear – to create a dialogue with room for the many facets of experience that the women have bound within their home lives. Conducting the interviews over a long period of time also meant that the dynamic of the women's experiences could be explored. As I have suggested in the previous chapter, the experience of home is not static and this sense of ongoingness informed my decision to construct narratives of home over a longer time (see in particular Gurney, 1997). I intended to have contact with the women over a period of one year. However, the scheduling of interviews was not fixed in advance and, dictated by the women's individual availability, the time period spent in contact varied between seven and eleven months.

Recruiting respondents for a project of this length - and for one which required considerable investment on the part of participants - could have been a difficult part of the project (see Lofland and Lofland, 1996 and Mason, 1996 for discussion of such difficulties). Thankfully, this proved not to be the case. I decided that my initial approach would be an informal one in which I asked friends and colleagues if they knew anyone who they felt would be prepared to take part. This decision was largely due to the characteristics of the women upon whom this project is focussed. As outlined in Chapter One, this research considers home-owning women who are employed in what can be thought of as middle-class professions and as such are not all that far from the socio-economic demographic of myself and many of my friends and colleagues. Using an informal, and possibly more personal, approach rather than fliers and/or adverts, I hoped to lessen the amount that women might feel daunted by getting involved in a long-term project. Following on from the initial informal approaches, and hoping that these would bring a number of responses, I planned to employ the technique of snowballing – where initial participants suggest other people who might be willing to also participate – to recruit more women.

The actual pattern of recruitment in part reflected this strategy, but in other ways was more a matter of happenstance and evolving decisions about the project overall. Thus, while one of the women became involved after being approached by a colleague and one's inclusion was the result of snowballing, the others came into the project through direct contact with me – one was an existing friend who had participated in my pilot interviews and was keen to carry on into the research 'proper', one was someone I met at a wedding, and I came into contact with the other two women through singing engagements around Edinburgh. Once I had recruited six women, I took time to review the progress of the interviews. This review, coupled with my desire to engage with multiplicities of experience and narratives, led me to limit the sample size to six. I did expect to have to recruit other women in the event that some of those who had begun the project did not feel able to continue – for whatever reason – but, this did not

prove to be necessary as once involved the women showed tremendous interest and enthusiasm for the research and the conversations that it led them into.

Thinking about the process of interviews and then actually carrying them out was to prove a most gratifying and challenging process that asked questions of myself, the data I was collecting, and of the process of constructing a research project. During the period of time that made up my fieldwork, I was enthused and worried by both the methodological concerns about which I read, and the actual doing of the research. At times this led to great flurries of activity and progress, while at others it left me feeling unable to continue in the light of insecurity about the suitability of my choices and my ability to carry them out. In the sections that follow I consider in more detail some of the issues that surround my methodological choices. Firstly I consider the value of doing repeat in-depth interviews; secondly I discuss the legitimacy of small scale research, with a small number of respondents; thirdly, I then reflect upon the role that I played in collecting the women's stories and the difficulties that hearing and accommodating myself within the research created.

3.4.1 Reflections on using repeat in-depth interviews

While, as I have suggested above, it is not uncommon for social scientists to interview respondents more than once, the choice to repeat interviews four times over the course of many months is a relatively unusual one in geography. I have found that to meet over a period of time and have a series of conversations with the same women has been a very rewarding decision, but one that proved to have its difficulties. I asked people to meet me repeatedly, to discuss all sorts of aspects of their lives – their homes, their relationships, their aspirations, their disappointments and frustrations, and so on – and to make space for these discussions in their routine time after time. This was not an inconsiderable request. It is one that necessitated a large amount of commitment on the part of the women and myself; in part this commitment was to the idea of the project – which I believe was not just mine but became a commitment the women held too – but also to each other and the relationship that we were creating as we met.

I have discussed above some of the issues about women carrying out interviews and the particularities of the relationships that a feminist approach might encourage, however adopting such an approach does not lessen the extent of the commitment that taking part in the research represented. Further to this, as Moss (2002) suggests, research relationships are ones in which the people involved are not necessarily all that comfortable and are not always harmonious. There were no guarantees for either the women respondents, or myself, that we would get on in any way. We had no way of knowing if we would be able to create relationships that would sustain the negotiation of exchange in an interview that lasted an hour, let alone hours spread over a the best part of a year. Despite this, once begun, none of the women withdrew from the project. In the discussion that follows, I want to consider in more detail the value of this approach, and the ongoing relationships that it created. I will do this from two, interrelated, perspectives: firstly, in terms of the depth and complexity of data it created and, secondly, in terms of the research relationships that it necessitated and encouraged.

Qualitative research is recognised as a form of data collection that leads to in-depth and rich data (Mason, 1996; Silverman, 2000). The exchanges that occur within interview situations can generate accounts of experience and understanding that interweave people's individualised stories with pervasive discourse in ways that illuminate the complexities of their geographies. This is generally held to be true of research that meets with respondents in a one off interview situation and builds accounts that extend across individuals. In this research, using repeat in-depth interviews led to the creation of data that similarly evokes a rich sense of the complexities of women's lives, but in a way that actively builds up the many layers of experience as they occur within each individual's narrative. In the most basic sense, repeatedly interviewing individual women meant that many more topics could be covered than when meeting with someone only once (see Appendix Three for a summary of interview conversations). The data that results therefore represents a greater spread of experience within one person's narrative of home and self-identity than

might otherwise be anticipated. This has most certainly proved to be the case as the women were continually talking to me about new things and thoughts, relating stories of their lives that caused us to consider fresh themes, influences, difficulties and so on.

However, repeat interviewing was not only a means to cover lots of different stories. To suggest that meeting and talking with the women a number of times simply allowed us to talk about lots of things is to flatten out the process of narrative construction. As Griffiths (1995, also see Jamieson, 1998) suggests, narratives of self-identity are made up of many, interwoven layers of experience and understanding. They are a coming together – and at times also a moving apart – of personal experience and pervasive discourse and as such represent the moment of which they tell and the wider context from which the story stems. Such a dynamic mixing makes for narrative structures that spread wide and stand tall, supported by the many strands of linkage that create the events of people's lives. I feel the repeated interviews offer a space within which both the stories, and the means by which they are constructed, can begin to emerge. In large part this is because there was more time for the women to work through their stories; they could gradually seek out which parts of it they might want to emphasize, downplay, connect, distance and so on. Episodes, or parts of stories, such as those that Gurney (1997) and Steedman (1986) discuss, can therefore be brought together in a plotting of a larger story that contains the many twists and turns that occur in events and in the women's responses to those events. Thus, within a research structure that created space and time, there was the opportunity to embrace digressions, extended metaphors, and contextualising or background stories, all of which enrich the research knowledges created, but all of which can be lost in one off exchanges.

There was also the opportunity to follow events that were occurring in the women's everyday lives as the research was taking place. Meeting the women on more than one occasion meant that it was possible to consider how decisions they might have been faced with had turned out and what the consequences of

them had been. This impacted upon the research on various levels. First amongst these was that it added further to the depth of the collected stories; events cease to be singular recallings but evolve as the interviews progress and as such they represent the dense web of interconnections that lead to decisions and events. Being able to talk about change as it was unfolding also meant that dynamic and ongoing understanding of home, which I have argued for in the previous chapter, was realised in the data that I collected. The accounts that develop over the various meetings are ones that change as events develop and in so doing almost effortlessly reflect an underpinning of the research. The use of repeat interviews also had considerable impact on the emergence of stories because being able to stay with the stories over time allowed some to gather importance. For example, stories of homes being sold and women moving became stories of great importance in some of the overall narratives as the time spent with the women increased. Being able to follow the processes as they happened meant that they were not contained within a single reference point but were able to spread across the individual narratives as the women understood them to impact on so many other areas of their lives. As such, the long narratives that repeat interviewing facilitated created space to follow events and came to shape the data that is represented in the thesis overall.

Managing this process was not always easy however. While repeat interviews create the possibility of long and constantly evolving narratives, actually making this happen required careful thought and conscious planning. The most obvious challenge was remembering what was talked about from one session to another and, in the light of that, managing a balance of further discussion and development of stories without too much repetition of conversations already had. My main strategy in the face of this was conscientious transcription of interviews from tape to typed text. I completed transcriptions of the interviews as soon as possible after the meeting had taken place and annotated these copies with notes that were, in part, the beginnings of analysis but, for the purposes of this discussion, also acted as aide memoirs for myself. Through using these notes, I was able to construct a web of reference that served to summarise what

had already been talked about and highlight points that might usefully be talked about further. I also offered a similar opportunity to the women respondents by ensuring that they had a transcript of the last interview prior to the next one taking place. I am not sure quite what the women did with these copies but at points it was clear that they had read through parts of them as they would refer to specific exchanges in order to initiate further discussions. Overall - my uncertainty of the use made of the transcripts by respondents notwithstanding - I found this a useful strategy and never felt that individual interviews were difficult to begin or contained conversations that we had obviously had before.

Another important part of managing the repeating series of interviews that make up this research was the relationship that developed between the women who took part as respondents and myself. As I have suggested above, research relationships are not always ones in which both parties feel comfortable. However, developing and maintaining relationships that allowed the research to continue were central to this project. As Gilbert (1994) suggests, the personal relationships that are created through research exchanges are central to the overall process as they provide the framework around which research knowledges develop. Discussions of such relationships are often framed in terms of the interviewer and interviewee finding a shared understanding and some level of trust in the hope that these will create an atmosphere in which respondents will feel able to disclose information about themselves (Mishler, 1986; Silverman, 2000). In one sense carrying out repeat interviews could facilitate this because, just as they allow more time and space for the development of themes, they allow time and space for relationships to be created that are potentially deeper or more comfortable.

Certainly meeting each of the women a number of times did mean that we engaged each other in ways that meeting only once would not have allowed. As the interview sequence continued, sessions would often begin with conversations about general happenings in our lives. Indeed, on more than one occasion I was urged by women to arrive a bit early so that we could 'chat' and several times

was invited to stay on after the interview was finished to share a meal. I understand this to work on a number of levels: firstly, it was a form of polite conversation that broke the ice of each meeting; secondly, it was a means of filling in some of the blanks that lay in-between our meetings; thirdly, it set out a pattern of exchange which could be drawn on by us both in the conversations that were thought of as interview. I was very keen for the women to understand that the interviews were a process of exchange and these conversations were a way to demonstrate this. Encouraged by feminist calls for an eschewing of more traditional research hierarchies, I wanted to create relationships that were formed through reciprocity (see collections such as Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Ribbens and Edwards, 1998; Roberts, 1981). Thus, instead of interviews in which the respondents actively gave and I passively received – as Maynard (1994, p15) suggests, the researcher as 'sponge' approach – I hoped to create a sense of collaboration and give clear indications that I was invested in an exchange that moved in both directions.

Negotiating the realities of this is not necessarily an easy one however. Oakley (1981, also see Kirwood, 1993; Mauthner, 1998; McKay, 2002; Miller, 1998) for example, discusses the delicacies faced when deciding what should be shared and when such sharing would be appropriate and/or helpful. She found that knowing how much information about herself and her own experiences to bring to bear on a research relationship was difficult. I too found this a challenge and throughout the interview process found myself reviewing and re-considering what was an appropriate amount of sharing. I found that my concerns revolved around a number of axes because while I wanted to create a sense of sharing, I did not want to burden my respondents with my own stories. Firstly, I was wary of pressuring them into articulating their stories in terms of mine; in common with other feminist researchers I was particularly conscious that the women I interviewed were not necessarily feminists and should not feel pressured into thinking about their experience through a feminist lens (England, 1994; Oakley, 1981). Secondly, while I did not want my presence or part of the research relationship to be invisible, I did not want to dominate the knowledge that was

produced through the interviews. Thirdly, I was aware that at the end of the research the relationships that we had created would, in most cases, come to an end; the relationships that I was working to create were, in the main, temporary ones and this tempered the exchanges that I initiated (see Gilbert, 1994). Finally, and perhaps most mundanely, I did not want to bore any of the women with tales about my home and relationships about which they were under no obligation to have any interest.

Upon reflection, I feel that the ongoing nature of the research helped this process of negotiation and collaboration. Most obviously it allowed time in which to carry out and reflect on these negotiations. Within the meetings that I had with individual women there was space within which our relationship could ebb and flow around different balances of give and take. Crick (1992) highlights the importance of just such a sense of movement; he suggests that creating collaborative research relationships that extend over longer time periods offers the chance to encompass and appreciate the constantly shifting boundaries of mutual dependence between researcher and researched. Within a relationship that is understood to be collaborative there is room for the complex webs of shared experiences that shape, and in turn are shaped by, the narratives that result from research interactions. Thus, I did share stories about myself and my home – my mother's choice of curtain material, my struggles with utility companies, my experiences of living alone, to cite but a few – and through sharing, found that points of commonality were highlighted, moments in which my respondents were affirmed as 'experts' were created, and an ease of mutual exchange developed which in turn facilitated the continued success of the interviews.

3.4.2 Reflections on small sample size

In her discussion of small group interviews, Longhurst (1996) describes how she moved from considering these groups – where only two women took part - as failed research, to understanding the explanatory power that they held. She suggests that through working with small numbers of women she found a new

focus upon the stories and anecdotes they related to her. The stories came to represent the value of experience in understanding the processes of the women's geographies; the need to find transferable 'truths', that claimed authority through their transferability, was mediated upon realising the way in which indivdiualised stories told of social discourse. The experience that Longhurst (1996) relates is, she claims, consistent with her aims as a feminist geography as – albeit by accident – her small group interview created a space in which social relations and geographies were illuminated and explained through in-depth recounting of experience. Valuing the power of personal experience to describe and explain matters of pervasive social discourse, such as Longhurst claimed, lies at the heart of my decision to base this project on the narratives of six women.

As I have already discussed in my consideration of Griffiths' (1995) theorisation of narratives of self-identity, using critical research narratives is a means to engaging with a multipilicity of theoretical concerns as they occur within the course of one narrative. Focussing upon the narrative that any one given person creates offers salient comment on, not only the individual nature of her/his experience, but also upon the wider discourses that serve to shape that experience. Accounts, such as those I have collected, can therefore be understood as being simultaneously personal and pervasive/private and public in ways that make salient comment on social discourses (Mbilinyi, 1989; Miles and Crush, 1993). Given their in-depth construction, it is important to also appreciate that personal narratives can also be understood to make comment whether grouped in large number or standing alone. As Skeggs (1997) suggests, it is important in research to appreciate the meaning that lies within each and every account of experience that is collected:

> The women of this study are not just ciphers from which subject positions can be read off; rather they are active in producing meaning of the positions they inhabit.
> (Skeggs, 1997, p2)

Thus, within academic research, there is a need to accord equal significance to the narratives heard; just as it is significant to the person being researched so too

it should be significant to the research knowledges that are written up. To argue for the importance of experience, and for the importance of experiences of those who might be thought of as marginal, and then to claim that such experiences are only important if collected in larger number is, I feel, a contradiction.

Practically, there are also advantages to doing research such as this with smaller numbers of respondents. As I suggested above, the narratives produced through the repeat interviews were in-depth and complex ones that ranged over many topics and events and were subject to revisions, contradictions and digressions. The volume of material generated in personal narratives, and the way in which stories emerge and get linked, means that the sense, or lack of sense, of narratives is potentially difficult to ascertain and then hold onto. Developing the conversations – and in subsequent analysis – over a longer period of time therefore involves being able to cut across a single person's narrative in order to make links, stimulate further discussion and so on, and this takes considerable concentration and work. It is not the same as following a question schedule that is put to a larger group and grouping answers with the aim to identified themes and therefore I found that working with a small number of women made the data collection and interpretation more manageable.

Working with such a small group of respondents, all of whom closely shared a particular socio-economic profile, does however create potential problems. I have identified in my discussion of choosing to do interviews that there is a tension surrounding the idea of women interviewing women. This tension revolves around the idea of similarity. If women interview women there is the possibility that the claims of similarity will, rather than create meaningful research knowledges, lead to an obfuscation of important differences. Within such a small group it is at times difficult to see and meaningfully consider difference because experiences often converge or mirror each other. Working through this concern initially led me to mark out difference very strongly; voices that dissented from the more common narrative were juxtaposed against the most often told stories in ways that I thought created more meaning for the

argument of the thesis overall. However, I found that the delight I had found in collecting such in-depth narratives from a smaller number of women who I got to know quite well lay in the nuances that created in my research material, rather than the contrasts. Stamping difference onto the accounts was in some sense to caricature the stories in order to make meanings that really lay in the variety that came from close reading of seemingly similar accounts. Thus, while I am alert to the tensions that my approach may create in terms of telling falsely uniform stories, I am also confident that the particularity of accounts taken from a small group leads to a richness of narrative that lends its own meaning.

3.4.3 Reflecting and reflexing myself

Throughout doing this research I have been very conscious of the role that I play in making the stories that it represents. Recognising and accommodating the appearances that I make in the various stages of the work has been a difficult, and at times almost paralysing, process. Dealing with issues surrounding my subjectivity in the research is ongoing, but I have chosen to discuss it explicitly at this point because it was in the time running up to, and the actual, doing of interviews that my concerns were at their height. Thinking through the variety of roles that I understood I might have to adopt while carrying out in-depth interviews, did make me think very hard about the variety of subject positions I hold. In part, this was born out of concern that I would not be able to carry out the interviews successfully – I was worried, as I am sure many people are, that I did not have the credibility, the skills or the quick wittedness to engage my respondents in story telling about their homes and lives. But it was also born out of bewilderment at quite how I would come to engage with, and account for, my meaning, or the meaning of me, within the research.

I understood from the start that there were many positions I would adopt during the research process and that these would need to be recognised and acknowledged. Embedded within feminist discourses, I am able to position myself in terms of my gender, class, race and so and am aware that my own, multiple subject positions need to be reflexively encompassed within my work.

There are many calls within feminist research literatures that encourage a critical engagement with just such matters and I spent much time considering what they might mean for me (for example, Gibson-Graham, 1994, on the problematics of representation; Katz, 1994 on multiple positioning; Rose, 1997 on renewed notions of reflexivity; and Stacey, 1988, on the issue of betrayal). However, in trying to relate these in my practice, I found myself stumbling, quite literally, over *myself.* As Hale (1991, also see Nast, 1998) suggests, interviewing is about trying to find ways of working through the processes of personal, emotional and bodily reinventions that I, as a researcher, go through. Being reflexive about the interviews therefore became less about trying to unzip the interviewer/interviewee boundary – in order to facilitate a more honest construction of researched knowledges, as discussed previously – and more about the story of me that is woven through the exchanges.

At first this concern centred on the idea of me being a researcher. I began interviews as someone from the university and as such was a relative stranger – although to the friend who came to participate I was obviously known in some way – and I actively used this distance in order to gain confidence. I also used the position as a university researcher to claim authority; in part, the authority to be in the women's home and talking with them about their lives, but also an authority over myself. By this I mean the 'personal' bits of myself that, as I have suggested above, I did not want to unnecessarily clutter up interviews with. However, I found this thoroughly unsatisfactory; I was uncomfortable and, at points, it led to conversations in which I seemed to be talking in a completely different, and heavily academic, discourse from the ones that my respondents used. Behind the veneer of the academic there seemed to be no way of realising the collaborative process that interviews can be or the shared narratives that resulting research knowledges can represent. Thus, by actively mobilising the distance between my own subject positions, I was creating a situation whereby I remained distant from my respondents in ways that constrained the potential benefit of doing such in-depth and personalised research.

Gradually I became more comfortable contributing stories about myself; I came to realise that they were less of an intrusion and more the means of introducing and discussing the complexities of experiences that the respondents and myself, at least in part, shared. Like Devault (1990), I found that talk about routine and everyday experiences was a way of opening the boundary between theory and experience and, as such, allowed me to realise my aim to value experience as an articulation of explanation. Through allowing parts of my own life into the conversations, I found ways in which the complexity of theory could be articulated in more everyday conversation. I also found that it was not only me who benefited from this because this created a better atmosphere and exchange for my respondents. Undoubtedly they understood me better, but also they understood that they could offer their own experiences, confident that they were meaningful and important enough to be included in something that was 'academic'. As a result, I began to better appreciate what the idea of rapport really meant; it was not about just listening and silently making a connection, nor was it about forcing my story into the situation, rather it is an active process in which complex webs of mutual – and differing – identities are forged.

In many ways this is a discussion about reflexivity. The practice of reflexivity is one that attempts to explicitly link the idea of self to the process of knowledge construction. It is about seeking that fusion of the subjective and the objective that might enable an embodied retelling of what is shared in interviews. It also demands reflection on the ways in which I, the researcher, am embedded and co-opted into the process of research and the knowledges it produces (Allen and Farnsworth, 1993; Nast, 1994; Rose, 1997; Thompson 1992). In this sense, my reflections here are me being reflexive, but my engagement with the idea of myself is also more than a debate about the need for reflexivity. It is about more fully realising, and coming to terms with, the variety of subject positions that are possible, indeed necessary, for a researcher to adopt to be able to carry out research. It is about realising that I worked with, presented and performed a mesh of subjectivities that bought together 'the researcher' and 'me' in ways that

were enjoyable and which stimulated a piece of research that held at its core the power of people's experiences in the creation of critical, research narratives.

3.5 Listening to and analysing stories

Crang (2001) suggests that the process of making meaning from qualitative data is a somewhat mythical one within geographical research. He suggests that all too often material is somehow produced to create a particular point or to act as an exemplar for a particular theoretical exploration. Likewise, Jackson (2001) points to the need to take time and care over the material collected through qualitative data so that it comes to represent work that is more than a simple, descriptive retelling of a story already told. Both Crang (2001) and Jackson (2001) go on to present a framework for analysis and interpretation that includes the processes of transcribing, coding and making meaning. In the following section of this chapter, I will address all three of these processes in order to show how the personal narratives told during the research came to be understood and represented in that which follows.

3.5.1 From tape to transcript

All of the interviews carried out during the research were tape recorded with the permission of respondents and, as I have suggested in previous discussions, these recordings were typed up into transcripts of the conversation. Initial recordings of the interviews were a most useful and efficient means of collecting and storing the data: they offer a relatively reliable record of the conversation and are a means to revisit the nuances of the conversation many times, long after it has finished. However, using tapes as a basis for further work is cumbersome; for example, while they can be repeatedly accessed they are do not allow for annotation or for easy transfer of text. As a way to move data into a more manipulable form, most qualitative researches use transcription. This is a laborious process but one which, as I have suggested above, is one that facilitates a more in-depth familiarity with interview material and can lead to the beginnings of coding material (Lofland and Lofland, 1995).

There are conventions to transcription, such as how to denote pauses, gestures and so on, which try to capture the nuances of interaction that are often lost in the move from tape to transcript and aim to create uniformity across transcripts (Silverman, 2001; also see Laurier, 1998 for a critique of such conventions). I was very keen to maintain as much of the conversational sense of the interviews in the transcripts and found that putting them into the framework of some of these conventions disrupted this sense. I wanted the page to have the sense of interchange and inserting markings such as slashes and precise timings of pauses seemed to me to unnecessarily interrupt the stories. That said, I did find it useful to indicate loud speech, exclamations, pauses and so on and so did make use of some markings such as capital letters to indicate louder talking. I also felt that the process of transcription has become one of the means by which qualitative researchers have tried to claim a rigour and validity that more quantitative research claims – albeit problematically. Transcription did not make the narratives of the research any more valid or meaningful and I therefore wanted them to be in a form that was easily accessible to myself, my respondents and to those who might read the extracts used in any writing.

Once a transcript was completed I began to interact with them through annotations. These annotations were in part a means of making myself become more familiar with the data that was in the transcripts but were also the first step I took at making new meaning out of the research narratives. I had transcribed my interviews so that they were printed out on only half the page and used the rest of the page as a space in which to note down a series of thoughts. These thoughts were many and varied: they were my reactions to stories; points where I thought an academic reference reflected the woman's story; cross-references to other parts of narrative; suggestions of themes; notes to encourage me to talk about the story further in a subsequent interview were a few of the annotations. These annotations proved a most useful research strategy and were a means to advance the research while maintaining a sense of dialogue the stories in their earliest, and most complete, form. In this sense, I understood the transcripts that

I continued with onto the next stage of the research to be a mixture of typed out conversation and the conversation that I had through annotation.

3.5.2 Coding stories

The process of coding is commonly understood to be a systematic analysis of data that facilitates the continuation of a research argument through empirical material. As Dey (1993) suggests, through the categorisation of material that coding represents, researchers are able to organise and make meaning out the research material that they gather. He suggests that understanding of research knowledges is too difficult to achieve when considering data in its entirety and so to progress research there needs to be a process by which the whole is broken down into a series, of often interlinked, themes. I found this process very difficult, however, and was reluctant to break down the narratives that I had spent so long helping to construct. My reason in carrying out research that produced long and in-depth narratives was so that the complexities of those narratives could be better appreciated. To cut them up through coding seemed to me to be at odds with this. I appreciated the way in which themes were clearly visible in, and across the narratives, and the way that these might form the basis for a series of chapters but was reluctant to pick those out of the wider narrative.

This reluctance meant that to begin with I worked with the annotations that I had made on the transcript. These, I had come to appreciate as being part of the transcript and, as such, using them was a way of picking out bits without really taking them away from the context within which they rested. I could therefore keep transcripts in their complete form and made lists of page numbers on which I could find references to particular ideas, stories and so on. Initially this process worked well as I could sit with the transcripts spread out in front of me and feel like the stories were all being held together. This also appealed to me because it took me away from using a computer package. I was not particularly comfortable with using computer packages for interpretation for a number of reasons, not least that I do not like using computers! However, I had concerns

about the ways in which computers exaggerate the 'chopping up' of data, showing only small bits at any one time and dragging lists of coded references seemingly out of nowhere. I was also sceptical about the way in which, similarly to the process of transcription, computer packages have been heralded as a way to make qualitative research more rigorous, valid and important (Crang et al, 1997; Hinchliffe et al, 1997). With all this in mind, I persisted with paper copies and kept sections of narratives as long as possible when I talked and wrote about them.

This was, however, too difficult to sustain. I found that the demands of writing up the research was in constant tension with my wish to have long, densely connected webs of narratives. My difficulty came in two, interrelated forms: firstly it was difficult to create and maintain a tightly organised focus on details of stories. My working with transcripts meant that I knew that data well but with so many stories it was difficult to always be as precise as was needed. This problem which was highlighted in writing when I struggled to make decisions about which particular bits of narrative I should use at which point. I was, in effect, writing with chopped up stories but trying to think and plan with longer stories. The tension was too much and I revisited my annotated transcripts with a view to making the annotations into formalised, and systematised codes.

In many ways this process had, of course, already begun with the annotations and was a means of developing those groupings that dealt with similar issues. What became clear was that the groupings were structures around stories that the women developed and spent most time discussing. These initial groupings form the basis of the three empirical chapters of the thesis – experiences of being grown up, relationships with mothers and the emotions surrounding moving. Within these I then developed a web of codes that fed into the larger themes that I had identified, purposefully allowing these codes to correspond to more than one in order that the density of connection apparent in the narratives remains discernable (see Appendix Four for a summary of codes). What also became clear during this process was the way in which I interacted with the research

material. I could hear myself; both through my voice and the voices of the women and the stories that they told. I could also hear the theories and studies that I was involved with academically. The notes that I was making were ones in which I flagged up points of interest that flowed from, and back to, other research literatures. Thus, in some part, the process was not only a coding of the women's narratives but also a coding of my identification – both personal and theorised - with my respondents and their stories.

Crang (2001) describes a somewhat similar process and explains how coding came out of the life stories he had collected in the form of categories that informed chapter structures. Through a close engagement with the transcripts he had created, he moved between abstracted ideas he engaged with in the academy and the voices of those people who had participated in his project, allowing both to structure what appeared as chapter outlines. Within these outlines was the room to hold both theory and experience as, at all times, he was referencing both the transcripts and academic text as a means of 'fleshing out' the outlines that had initially developed. Thus, the means of interpretation lay not only in applying theoretical reference to empirical narrative but in juxtaposing the two in a dialogue, allowing them both to take the lead in guiding the research knowledge being created. As Crang (2001) suggests:

> My aim was to produce something like a collage from all the segments and fragments that coding had generated and from them to offer some sort of path through the material. I wanted to keep a sense of the dialogue and debate.
> (Crang, 2001, p230)

This too has been my aim, to maintain a dialogue between the subjects that created the narratives I work with, and the theories in which I frame and interpret their stories. It is not so much that the piles of paper and the changing series of noted conversations with the transcripts that Crang (2001) writes of informed my process of analysis, more that it seems to have reflected the compromise that I reached in the analysis of the interview material.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have suggested that the use of personal narratives, collected through a series of repeat in-depth interviews is a useful way to engage with experiences and understandings of home spaces. I have suggested that such an approach to research offers the possibility of engaging with, and implementing research design that is in some ways feminist. The narrative structure of telling allows the subject of research to remain active within the process and holds at the centre a sense of the importance of subjectivity. It reflects, and in so doing supports, that understanding of self-identity as a web, that is discussed in the literature review, and in so doing suggests that the method employed in the research is closely tied to the theoretical position adopted. I have also discussed the difficulties in keeping depth and connectivity of subjective webs of self-identity throughout the research process. Albeit a problematic process, the imposition of a coding framework proved to be a most useful one, enabling the research narrative of the overall thesis to emerge and develop from the many narratives told in the interviews. It is to this narrative that I now turn in the following three, substantive chapters.

Chapter Four

Becoming a home-owning woman

> I thought YES! MY OWN PLACE! ... you know, now I've made it into my own place and I can do what I want, when you want, you know all the things you think ... and, it is about being out there on your own, and in some ways that's easy 'cos you're all confident and happy, but you run into things that aren't that easy, you know, people thinking about how things should be, how you should live in your place and ... well, I'd got to share the place and I might love him all well and good, but that was, I mean sharing our space was not as easy as I thought it would be.
> (Mary Int#1:15)

4.1 Introduction

I suggested in Chapter Two that regarding home as a socio-spatial landscape that provides a backdrop for, and is constitutive of, personal geographies has enabled geographers to place the idea of home in a new critical and analytical light (Allan and Crow, 1981; Domosh, 1998; Somerville, 1992). I also suggested that homeownership is appreciated to mark out a particular series of relations with home spaces in terms of people's participation in social, economic and political discourses (Saunders, 1990; Hamnett, 1999). In this chapter I suggest that the women's narratives of home testify to, and illuminate, the significance of homeownership within their narratives of self-identity. Becoming a homeowner represents a series of moments in which the women realise, and reflect, upon their expectations and experiences of home, as they become homeowners. The process of becoming a homeowner also creates moments in which the women consider the workings of pervasive understandings of what it is to be a woman, to be young and to grow up upon the choices they make. As such, the events

and emotions that occur through the buying, and setting up, of a home are moments from which it is possible to see the interweaving of the personal and pervasive in the narratives of home the women tell. Indeed, a number of different themes emerge within stories of becoming a homeowner; there are stories about what it means to be grown up, about what it means to be a grown up woman, and stories of how these are entangled in stories about the idea of home.

In the discussion that follows, I explore these interwoven narratives of homeownership. In particular, I consider the ways in which homeownership and adulthood are linked together through narratives that tell of aspirations of independence, being in control and commitment. Such links have been suggested elsewhere (Ainley, 1991; Jones, 1995; Setterson, 1998) and point to the importance that having a distinct, and often distant, home space from one shared with parents. This is key in many people's constructions of adult independence. Establishing homeownership is a powerful means of doing this, and the women embed their discussions of themselves as grown up within the processes of ownership. However, such a reading of these accounts cannot, as feminists have argued, be considered without a simultaneous reading of the gendering of ownership and the relations that it creates and sustains. Thus, as Gilroy (1994, also see Watson, 1988) suggests, while ownership may be understood as a means of securing independence, for many women this is tied into relationships with men. Entangled with discourses of family, care and gender relations, women's experiences of homeownership are not simply a celebration of independence but a balancing of this with particular expectations of their role within a home (Mckie, Bowlby and Gregory, 1996, 1999; Gittins, 1993; McCarthy and Simpson, 1991). Thus, the women's narrative of homeownership can be read for the interplay of other people's expectations and limitations with their own aspirations for independence.

In this chapter I examine the way in which the women link homeownership with feeling grown up and the problems that surround this. In the first section I

consider the way in which the women set up the process of homeownership as marking out a transition to being grown up. The discussion highlights stories that tell of a sense of change in the women's relationships with their partners, their parents, their employers, their finances and of the way these are caught up in stories of homeownership. Their narratives construct moving into homeownership as a sort of 'rites of passage'; this rite bestow upon the women senses of independence, control and commitment. The stories suggest that these are much prized and sought after, being characterised simultaneously as natural and as an achievement. In the second half of the chapter, I turn to examine the tensions that develop in the women's stories of homeownership and serve to undercut the celebratory tone of the earlier stories. In these sections I examine the ways in which homeownership also represents a 'rite of passage' into a construction of home and woman that militates against their experiences of independence and control. In particular, I focus upon stories of the assumptions people make about the women's relationships with their partners and the women's narratives of privacy within their home spaces. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the 'rite of passage' homeownership represents can helpfully be mobilised in order to evoke the complexity of the women's narratives of self-identity.

4.2 The possibilities of being a homeowner: being grown up

All of the women associate the idea and experience of homeownership with feeling grown up. Moving into ownership appears in the narratives as a series of processes in which the women realise new strands of their self-identity and around which, in part, they construct a sense of themselves as being grown up and adult. Grace, for example, clearly constructs her homeownership as an important strand in her sense of being grown up:

> Yes, it does make me feel grown up and more like an adult, to have my own flat, to think that I am a homeowner, yes I think that is about being an adult.
> (Grace Int#1:9)

Similarly, Laura creates a narrative in which homeownership and feeling grown up are woven around each other:

> It made an important difference, to own a place .. you know, to own a home, my home, because, well it sounds a bit pompous, but it shows something doesn't it? It shows that I am a grown up and I can do all the grown up things in life that let you have a home of your own, I can do that, I am here in my own home and having my home kind of, well, it is something that marks out that bit of my life that is really grown up.
> (Laura Int#4:23)

Caroline also tells of a moment when she realised the significance of entering homeownership in terms of her being a grown up. In advance of her moving into her home, she had a conversation with her father in which he explicitly linked her ownership with a new stage in her life, one in which she should appreciate herself to be more grown up:

> There was this conversation, and dad was very serious and he told me that this was a new stage for me and that I was now going to have to be active in fending for myself, and he was, well he was quite solemn about it all, like it was a sort of ceremony, passing me out into the next bit of my life [...] it was about recognising I wasn't in any way a kid anymore, like now I was, I mean I was still his child but that I was also grown up.
> (Caroline Int#3:9)

In these pieces of story the women construct a sense of homeownership being a line over which they cross in order to appreciate a more grown up sense of themselves. In this way, their homeownership can be understood as being a 'rite of passage' through which they journey into a series of social and material relationships that are symbolic and constitutive of them becoming adult. Kenworthy Teather (1999, also see Hockey and James, 2002) suggests that such lines often appear in people's narratives of their lifecourse; the lines are drawn in order to demonstrate, and make meaning out of, changes that occur in people's narratives of self-identity. These lines are not ones drawn only in retrospect or only by the individual, rather they represent a series of actions and reactions that are sometimes anticipated, sometimes lived at the time and sometimes recognised in retrospect. The idea of a 'rite of passage' therefore encompasses a series, or collection, of expectations and experiences that are variously engaged with as people make a transition from one stage to another, or as they begin to weave a new strand of their narrative of self-identity. In this sense, the women's

stories of homeownership, and the moments of change that it represents, can be read for the way in which they make sense of their developing narrative of an adult identity and of being grown up. In particular, they can be read for the ways in which the women construct and identify with various characteristics of being grown up. In the following discussion I consider the women's narratives of homeownership for the ways in which they articulate a transition into adulthood through senses of independence, being in control and of commitment.

4.2.1 Being independent

Feelings of independence are common across the women's narratives of homeownership and being grown up. Owning a home is understood to simultaneously foster and mark out a sense of independence in ways that also fosters and marks out their status as grown up. Thus, stories of home tell of the achievement of independence that homeownership represents and tell of the place that independence holds within the women's narratives of being grown up.. As Charlotte suggests:

> Having your own home? A symbol of independence? Yeah, yeah, oh definitely .. it is about growing up and being independent, I mean, well I look at some of the people I work with and they have their own places and you look at how they get on with things and don't have to depend on people, and they have a confidence about them that comes from knowing that you are independent and look after yourself [...] you get to grow up and work it out for yourself.
> (Charlotte Int#1:11)

Likewise, Mary tells a story of her sense of independence:

> You have a sense of being out there on your own and that is a good thing I think, yeah ... you have to make the decisions that makes you find an independence that I don't think I had, well had had to use before in quite the same way and, and well they are not all big decisions, are they? But, like what are you going to have in the fridge and maybe a better, a more homeowner kind of decision .. well what carpet, which boiler man to use, you know those sorts of decisions you make independently from a landlord, or your mum and dad or someone.
> (Mary Int#1:12)

Feelings of independence and the process of homeownership are held together in Charlotte's and Mary's stories. The creation of a home, within which they have

to initiate and manage their day-to-day routines and decisions, is a means to creating a sense of independence that they enjoy. This realisation of independence, through the establishment of a home, is identified by Jones (1995, also see Laws, 1994; Wyn and White, 1997). She suggests that the process of setting up home creates distance and distinction between the social and material relationships occurring in previous, childhood, homes and grown up relationships they go on to create. The distance that is created through moving, opens up a space within which a new set of relations – with people, money and so on - can be established. This process represents independence for the person establishing their new home.

While Jones (1995) observes that independence can be fostered through the moving out of a childhood home and into a variety of tenure, the narratives the women construct in this research contain within them a particular story about the impact of ownership upon their sense of being independent. Becoming a homeowner appears to increase the sense of independence that the women experienced. Once a homeowner, they take on decisions and choices that previously were not theirs to make, and in making those decisions they come to realise a greater amount of independence then they previously enjoyed. This is evident in Mary's story above. When renting, the landlord or lady would fix the boiler, but in her own home that became a process that Mary had to assume as her own. Mary explains the difference between the two situations in terms of the greater level of independence she has; not reliant upon her landlord to arrange and pay for the boiler maintenance is therefore a means by which Mary can realise a new sense of independence.

Constructing homeownership as an experience which led to a more developed sense of independence is present in a number of narratives. There is a strong sense in which renting creates relationships of dependence with landlords and ladies which do not arise when the women enter into homeownership. As Laura and Caroline suggest:

> It is yours, isn't it? And that means you don't have to do whatever it is that people think you should (Hannah: in what way?) well ... you, there's no landlord thing to deal with, you know you are not at the mercy of anyone else.
> (Laura Int#1:15)

> you grow up and you move in somewhere that is your own and you create a space that you are independently in charge of, you get to the point when you are responsible enough to have a mortgage and so you do because that is the way to make the most of things, you know, you want to be able to do what you want in your own place without some one else setting the rules, you know, you choose, you decide independent from other people, like you don't have to have your landlord's choice of dodgy wall paper, you know ... like you want to move, you do that independent of whether you are tied into notice periods, or have to move 'cos the landlord has a whim that he doesn't want to rent any longer, you are just independent from other people's decisions to a much greater extent.
> (Caroline Int#1:14)

The financial relationship that renting creates is seen by the women as lessening their sense of independence because, as Laura suggests, it means that they are 'at the mercy' of somebody else. The exchange that occurs between landlord/lady and tenant means that they have to accept the decisions taken by another party, they have to arrange their home lives to that person's schedule and priorities and live within a framework of someone else's making. Laura and Caroline understand homeownership to therefore offer a greater level of independence because being mortgaged to the bank or building society does not create the same two-way relationship as paying rent to a landlord. Thus, the independent home spaces that Jones (1995) writes of are most realisable to the women within the experience of homeownership.

Landlords are not the only relationship from which the women gain independence through their ownership. All of the women identified a changing relationship with their parents upon moving into their adult homes which they articulate in terms of feeling more independent. Laura's narrative exemplifies this:

> It is a different deal, really quite distinct, they are both home but one is where I am my parents' child and here I am with my

> husband and that makes it a different deal, marks out something different about me and about where I am at in my life.
> (Laura Int#1:11)

Moving into her own home therefore represents a boundary which divides the relationship that she had with her parents previously from the one that she understands herself to have now. Homeownership appears in Laura's story to be a juncture beyond which new, more independent and grown up relationships with her parents are developed. She suggests that while in her parents' home she assumes the position of their child which undercuts her sense of being grown up. When in her own home Laura is able to realise a greater sense of being grown up because she creates and sustains relationships independent of her parents. As her story develops she spells this out with reference to her finances:

> (HA: where does it say that you are at in your life?) well, it says that I've grown up, and that I have a job and, well, and that my job is well paid enough and steady enough to have a mortgage, and it says that I am separate from my mum and dad and making my own way in the world, it, it shows that I can make my own decisions and don't have to rely on my parents to make them for me or for that matter, pay for them.
> (Laura Int#1:11)

Moving from one home to another can be understood to represent a boundary in Laura's narrative that she draws out and mobilises in order to develop a narrative of self-identity that is grown up. This is done by realising – and relishing – a renewed sense of independence from her parents that, while living in other forms of accommodation, did not so strongly act upon her narrative.

Establishing a sense of independence is not always as straightforward as Laura's story suggests. In a number of the women's stories there is discussion of the ways in which feelings of being independent and grown up was a gradual process which at times seemed easy to grasp, at times was lost and at other times proved difficult to maintain. Charlotte's story demonstrates the flux and change surrounding the women's feelings of independence and the associated sense of being grown up that developed through their homeownership. In her narrative she suggests:

> I suppose it has taken a few years to realise the enormity of the responsibility, not necessarily the responsibility, but my ability to

> deal with it, what it means to be a property owner, to have .. your own flat [...] and I do manage it and that makes me feel good, it is satisfying, you know .. but .. my dad still has an eye over things I suppose in many ways he is still involved, like he still guarantees the mortgage like I don't call on him ever really to pay it at any month but he still is involved and I suppose keeps a check on things (Hannah: and how do you feel about that) well ... I can still do what I want, it is still my place and I make my own life here but .... sometimes it makes me feel still like his wee girl.
> (Charlotte Int#1:8)

> it is a dual edged sword almost, because you've got the safety net of knowing that he can step in and help if I really need it, but then just as you think you are getting there, it's like one step forward, two steps back.
> (Charlotte Int#1:10)

> now I do feel more grown up because I live in a nice flat, and I work, I work and that means that I can keep the flat, not entirely because Nathan [her partner] contributes and I have to have Cathy [her tenant] living here too paying rent, but I organise all of that and I work it out on my own so at the end of the day ... I mean, like I need their money but the arrangements are mine to make and so they don't stop from feeling like I'm sorted and grown up.
> (Charlotte Int#1:24)

> sometimes I think that I would be, like I think sometimes that I would have to live all on my own to, I mean being grown up you live on your own and you make an independent live for yourself on your own and sometimes .. well I've always had flatmates, and now Nathan is here too and so I'm always surrounded but then maybe I do still feel like I'm doing it on my own and am all grown up now.
> (Charlotte Int#1:24)

As Charlotte's narrative develops, the sense of independence she enjoys emerges as a dynamic experience. While clearly important to her narrative of being a grown up, her sense of independence ebbs and flows in ways that create uncertainty. Her initial assertion of independence through ownership is punctured as she considers the role her father continues to play in her home and the financial assistance she receives from her partner and tenant in order to meet her mortgage payments. At points these arrangements seem to undermine her feelings of independence as they are held in tension with her understanding of independence as living in a home on her own. However, what is also apparent

in her story is that, at times, she is able to find ways of asserting herself over that uncertainty. The result is that, while sometimes an uneasy association, ideas and development of independence play an important part in Charlotte's narratives of home and her developing sense of adulthood.

Narratives of independence are therefore ones of balance and maintenance. The women's homes are understood to create spaces within which, and from which, they can claim a sense of independence that in turn helps them to claim a sense of being grown up. This is prized, protected and promoted within the women's narratives. Indeed, despite the fact that all the women share their homes with a partner, the compromises this might make to their independence is, in the women's initial accounts, largely silenced. There is, instead, a tendency to make stories of their independence more prominent then their stories of compromise. In particular, this can be seen in some of the discussions of financial management. Grace's and Nell's stories illustrate this:

> I know that I couldn't afford this place on my own, like my salary, just me .. I wouldn't be able to do it but it is me who makes sure that everything works, I manage all the accounts and sort out everything, I mean, I really to do it by myself ... Jack, he knows, well just about nothing to do with the money side of this place, I do that independently and without any help from anyone and I think that, I think that matters, I would say ... a grown up house is about doing the money a bit on your own ... a bit anyway.
> (Grace Int#2:16)

> I make independent contributions to the flat and running it and bills and stuff, it is an equal amount each month as Michael ... it comes from my own account you know and it is important to know, for me it is important to know I can manage my obligations by myself, like, like if I have to borrow money off Michael I hate it and make sure that I pay him back on payday ... 'cos, I mean I know that we share the mortgage and the flat and stuff but it is important to me that I can do my bit by myself and I do, you know when I was a student I relied on my parents for my rent, like you know lots of, and ... now I meet my share of things by myself, I am financially independent and my payment of the mortgage is part of being independent.
> (Nell Int#2:6)

Being seen, and understanding themselves, to be independently managing the financial aspects of their homeownership is important to Nell and Grace. They both acknowledge that in order to meet the entire responsibility they rely upon their partners but over this they re-assert their own independence within that relationship. Thus, Grace concentrates on her management skills and Nell concentrates on the split in responsibility and how she funds this from her own salary. In this sense, the tension that co-habitation might have upon the relationship between homeownership and independence is eased by carefully focussing upon particular aspects of money management and the sense of independence the women maintain through that.

4.2.2 Being in control

Alongside experiences of independence, the idea of control, and a sense of being in control, is prominent in the women's narratives of home and homeownership. The feeling of being in control of their lives and their homes - through the decisions they can make, priorities they can set, the relationships they can develop and the routines they can establish –appears to offer a way for the women to articulate their experience of being grown up and of how being grown up relates to their experiences of home. While related to the expressions of independence highlighted in the previous discussion, the women construct a sense of being in control that differs from their understanding of independence. Thus, just as the women tell stories of the financial independence bound up in their homeownership, so they also tell stories of the way in which financial matters are the means through which they realise of sense of being in control. Grace, for example, suggests:

> Being in control of the finances is an important thing for me, like I said, my dad thought I would need all kinds of help sorting things out but I didn't and, and having, being the owner of this flat has meant that I have found a way of being more obviously in control (Hannah: in what way do you mean?) when I was living at my mum's place I handed over rent, you know, I paid over an amount and everything was provided in return but here I hand over the mortgage and then move money around so that the bills are paid, the food is in and things like that, I decide what to spend on

> furniture, treat us to a new lamp and things, you know, I just take control over more of the money flow here than before.
> (Grace Int#1:15)

Homeownership can therefore be understood as creating a narrative of self-identity in which Grace realises and assumes a greater sense of control over her financial relationships than her previous home demanded. In taking on ownership of her home, Grace begins to appreciate and enjoy a feeling of control that in turn is understood to create and confer feelings of being grown up.

Such stories of control emerge across the women's narratives and revolve around a variety of experiences. They are in part, as the extract of Grace's story suggests, about the control of financial matters, but they are also about decoration, food, television watching, and the various social and emotional relations of home. The women's stories therefore represent a variety of experiences through which they assert themselves upon the material and social relationships of home in ways that create the experience of control. Some of these relationships are wrapped up in the day-to-day goings on of home while others speak of the ongoing, longer term routines and relationships that are involved in homeownership. As Caroline suggests:

> Once the mortgage was sorted out and I was in here, I realised that this was my place now and .. like I realised I was the one to make into my home, you know I was the one to make the decisions, run things I suppose really I thought of myself as being the one who was in control ... like, like well I was control of where the furniture goes, what wallpaper goes on the walls, the kind of routines that we follow here.
> (Caroline, Int#1:17)

Likewise, Nell and Laura suggest:

> [Homeownership is] being in a situation where I can cope with my daily life and work and I can come home and run my own home, and I can pay my bills on time and I can, you know ... show, you know, I can put food in the fridge and make a meal and not live off bad rice and cheap beans and, yeah, I think they are all sort of defining of things that you look at, you know, older, capable ... in control women doing, and know I think I can do that too, I am in control of things.
> (Nell, Int#2:4-5)

> It was all about making your own decisions, and realising like never before that you could do what you wanted more or less and you could say what was good or bad in your own home ... ah, like some of it is trivial and meaningless really, like .. I don't know, eating off your knee in front of the TV, putting whatever you want up on the walls, and then some of it is more important like being able to display political posters or not allowing people to say obnoxious things, do you get what I mean? Like you can kind of be in control of what sort of things go on both the small things and the big, values kind of things
> (Laura, Int#1:33)

Thus, the women can be seen to develop a sense in which they take charge of the fabric and routines of their home spaces. This taking charge of decisions is most realised in the homes that they have come to own because these create a space within which they have the opportunity and the authority to demand or dictate on matters of taste, habit, opinion and values.

As with the stories of independence, feeling in control is something that the women celebrate. The link between homeownership and the feelings of control that the women experience is largely constructed as a positive one; living in their own home is thought of as bringing about feelings of being in control and such feelings are welcomed as forces for good in the women's lives. As Nell's story continues:

> I think that having that sense of, you know feeling like you can take control is a good thing, 'cos ... well it makes your life kind of work better I suppose and feeling like you are in control of things is empowering and fulfilling isn't it? You know, you have, have your own home and you look after it well and you look after yourself and you manage all of that and that has to give a good feeling, it makes me feel satisfied that I am getting on with things
> (Nell Int#1:5)

Similarly, Laura positively associates homeownership and a sense of being in control. She talks of the way in which she viewed grown ups and the sense of control she felt they had over their homes and their lives and how she anticipated for herself:

> It is what you think of I think, like .. well when you think about moving through your life you think that having your own place is a way to take control of things and be the person who can take charge and make the decisions and stuff (Hannah: what sort of

> decisions?) erm ... let, well .. I think that before I moved out of home I always imagined that people who lived in their own houses, you know they were sorted and managed things and you know, they were in control of their lives and had things .. just sorted out and now, I think I feel that and I kind of had it a bit as you move out of your mum and dad's place but I got a real rush of feeling like I was in control of my life when we bought this place and set it up.
> (Laura Int#1:32)

Being in control is therefore something that is positively embraced in the women's stories. Such a positive relationship reflects the way in which the pervasive discourses and rhetoric surrounding homeownership binds private ownership and control together. As Saunders and Williams (1988, 1989) suggest, private ownership is promoted and widely idealised for the possibilities of control that it offers individuals. Within the walls of their private home, people can construct narratives of self-identity that are seemingly uninterrupted by the pressures of more public social structures. Thus, there is a package deal that is created, whereby homeownership and realising feelings of control are enmeshed in a self-fulfilling relationship. Such packaging of this relationship, as Richards (1990, also see Gurney, 1999a) suggests, is a problematic one but these problems are often silenced or, at least initially, go unrecognised by people entering into homeownership. Laura and Nell speak of this package in the extracts above; they aspire to realising feelings of control in their lives and suggest that they seek, and find, at least in part, such fulfilment through their homeownership.

Upon moving into their new homes, the women highlight, in particular, the way in which they enjoy and use decorating as a means of developing and creating a sense of being in control. It is perhaps not surprising that decorating emerges from the narratives; the relationship between women and their homes is popularly understood to create particular patterns of consumption and work that lead to women being those most likely to concern themselves with tasks such as decoration of homes (Deem, 1986, Madigan and Munro, 1996). However, while this might mean that the women assume the burden of decoration, what is most apparent in their stories are the possibilities of decorating for realising a new

sense of control in their narratives of home and being grown up. As Caroline recalls:

> I moved in and whipped through the place, everything needed to be done and I took it on .. and I wanted to do it quickly so that the place became to feel like it was mine and not the woman's who had lived here before, do you know what I mean? I wanted it to be my kind of place and not have my home looking like someone else's and, and so, yeah I made it a real priority (Hannah: and did you enjoy it?) yeah, hell, yes! I chose all the wallpaper and the paint and I made the decisions and it was great doing that, I got a real kick out making the decisions and taking charge of things, I mean, well Jonathon and I actually did the work together, but I did all the decision making, I took control of the choices.
> (Caroline Int#1:15)

The extensive decorating that Caroline undertook involved realising feelings of control in two senses. In part, decorating allowed her to assert herself over the person who had lived there before her and created a sense in which she was in control of the way her home looked and the environment that she could create within her home. Living with someone else's decorative choices seems to Caroline to be living in someone else's home; re-painting and wallpapering is a way to over write the previous owner's home with her own tastes and understanding of what home means. Thus, decorating offers the possibility of taking control over her home environment and making it her own. However, this is not the only sense of control that Caroline finds in the decoration process because her story also highlights the feelings generated by being able to take the decisions about colour, patterns and so on. Her story suggests that moving into her own home offered her the opportunity to take responsibility for a series of decisions that she found empowering and which created a sense of her being control.

Caroline is not alone in realising a sense of being in control through the process of decorating. Grace, for example, also tells a story of the way in which moving into her own home offered an opportunity to control the way her home looked and the decisions that created the environment she wanted. Upon moving into homeownership, Grace found that choices, and her role in setting up and taking

those choices, arose in ways that she had never experienced before. She suggests:

> Oh, moving here and it being ours, like you know we owned it, oh, it meant that we could do what we liked which was great and much better then renting ... (Hannah: what sort of things could you do?) oh ... like decorating, I suppose, yeah, that is a good example, 'cos when you live with your parents you kind of get a choice, like I was given a choice for my bedroom but they said this, this or this, you know, and then when you rent you pretty much have to make do, don't you, but here I could make all the choices and that really made a difference, it made me feel like I living somewhere that was really mine and it made me feel really quite grown up 'cos I was the one taking the decisions, it came down to my choice.
> (Grace, Int#1:20)

Identifying possible paint colours, wallpapers, and curtain materials is a way in which Grace came to appreciate a sense of control and a feeling of being grown up. Whereas previous homes had always been under the control of someone else – her parents or a landlord/lady – upon moving into homeownership, Grace found that her home was under her control. Initially she found this an intimidating possibility:

> It is hard though, because I, well I found myself unsure what I liked and what would work and I think really, well I think that I didn't have the confidence and I, this is silly really, but I found myself thinking, would my mum like it (Hannah: oh no, that's not silly, I find myself doing that all that time!) [laughter] so, I'd be stood there thinking, would she like that colour, would she think that lamp was worth that amount of money, and then I realised it didn't matter what she thought because I was the one who was decorating my own home and it is my choice.
> (Grace, Int#1:21)

The sense of being in control of decisions regarding her home was, for Grace a gradual process in which she played off what she thought her mother's reaction to her decisions would be with what it was that she wanted. However, despite some early compromises, Grace still experienced a growing sense of control as she undertook decoration in her home.

Grace's and Caroline's narratives of decorating, and the narratives of being in control that they suggest is bound up in the processes of decoration, reflect the

importance that such processes have been accorded within understandings of home spaces. As Ellis (2000) claims, within the decorative choices that people make for their homes, lie stories about who they understand themselves to be. As such, those choices can be understood to be moments, within which, people realise a change or development in their narrative of self-identity. The decisions that people come to about how to decorate their homes are a means to process, and reflect, their identification with, and incorporation of, markers of class, age, gender and so on. Gullestad (1995) similarly suggests that the inside of homes are a canvass onto which people paint the rich and flexible dialogues that they have with popular and pervasive social influences and structures. Thus, the home that people create through home improvement can be read as a story of their social identity and identification. Caroline's and Grace's stories of decoration can, I suggest, be read for their understanding of what it means to be grown up. The possibilities of choice that they encountered, and the way in which they assert themselves in making the choices they did, speak of a developing sense of control over their homes and their narrative of a grown up self-identity.

While decoration is claimed as an empowering process in the women's narrative, the women's narratives also suggest there is a framework of what they can afford and what they understand to be good taste within which they make their decisions. As Madigan and Munro (1996, also see Shove, 1999) suggest, decisions about design and furnishing are often made with reference to budget constraints and involve a balancing of what is thought of as fashion with what is thought of as being value. Such concern is apparent in the women's stories, but rather then being considered as a restraint, it is linked into senses of being in control. Nell's discussion of buying kitchenware illustrates the interweaving of finance, fashion and furnishings:

> I think the matching was an important difference [..] in circumstances where you have to buy the things, it doesn't make sense not to have matching, I mean moving in here, it wasn't a case of having to make do with whatever, you know a couple of plates here and a few mugs there, you know ... what you've been given, it was more a case of, well, depending on the price

> obviously, but having your own money to buy things with, it was having almost a completely free choice [...] and making the decisions about what kettle to buy, what plates to have and working out what you like and what you can afford and making the right decision so that you get the right plates and don't end up broke .. it all added up, it made me, it made an important difference and I did feel good getting all the info and making those choices and getting things that matched up, the way that grown ups do.
> (Nell, Int#1:13)

Thus, while Nell is aware of the role that financial concerns play in her decision making about which plates to buy, she does not feel at the mercy of those concerns. Her narrative instead incorporates her management of finance as constituting and representing her ability to balance and control the various factors involved in furnishing her flat. Her success meant that not only did she fill her kitchen with products that she was pleased with, but is also marks out her ability to be in control of the various elements of the decision and confers a sense of being grown up.

Mary and Charlotte also highlight the importance of successfully controlling and balancing finance with building and decorative demands. In discussing their experiences of undertaking extensive work on their flats, they both weave threads of narrative that tell of their concerns and enjoyment in the face of taking control of renovations to their homes. Mary's renovations were extensive, opening up the roof space above her flat and creating a new floor that consisted of five rooms. In order to get the project up and running Mary and her partner and remortgaged their flat, employed architects, building engineers, builders and assorted trades people. Mary undertook overall management of the work and the investment this created led to her becoming intricately bound to the progress of the work:

> You want people to think that you are doing the right thing (Hannah: what makes it the right thing?) well, you've got to be doing what makes sense for the flat, you've got to be able to afford it and for it to increase the value of the place, and ... and then you've got to get the right builders, you know and make sure they keep on target [laughs] keep somewhere close to time targets [laughs] ... you want to be able to keep on top of things and I .. I

> suppose I wanted it to stay as my project rather than be dictated to by the size of the loan we could get, or the builder .. do you know what I mean? I wanted to be able to say that it was my project, that I had control over it, managed it well.
> (Mary Int#1:17)

In this story of her renovations, Mary lists the number of things that she juggled in order to make the project a success and binds them together in such a way that their successful juggling makes and represents her control over the project. Mary identifies the matter of cost, and of value for money, but places those within the web of factors that were involved in planning out and completing the work done. Thus, while finance is understood to be a factor, Mary's story incorporates this into a series of relations, the management of which simultaneously create and challenge the feelings of being in control associated with homeownership.

Similarly, Charlotte speaks of the sense of control that she understood to be bound up within her home improvements and of her feelings when it seemed that she had lost control:

> It was very satisfying, the ... I mean I managed all the renovations and stuff, got all the money together and worked out what and where it needed to be spent and what was sensible and all of that, and I did it all on my own and there was a lot of satisfaction in that and I felt really good about it all and like 'Waoho, look at me all grown up and getting on with things'.
> (Charlotte Int#1:10)

> and then .. well, then it did go over budget, 'cos it always does, doesn't it? (Hannah: it does seem to be the case) and then I had to go to dad and he had to bail me out and all of a sudden I felt like I was little girl again, you know, so it was kind of, you know, I, I ... when things are going well it feels like you have made it in the world and I am grown up, but when they are not I realise ... maybe how little I am, and how little I can cope or how .. I don't know, how little I am in the face of it all.
> (Charlotte Int#1:10)

Successfully managing the various demands of the projects they undertook appears to be both important and fulfilling to Charlotte and Mary. They construct stories in which careful planning and financial pragmatism combine to weave a sense of being in control that brings about feelings of satisfaction. As Charlotte's story testifies however, this is not always easy to maintain and the

sense of loosing control can disrupt the sense of being grown up that she associates with homeownership and the renovations she undertook. Rather than undermining the way in which their homeownership fosters a sense of being in control however, I would suggest that Charlotte's story serves to further highlight this relationship. As her control over the project begins to splinter, so to does her sense of herself as a grown up and her disappointment in feeling like a little girl again re-enforces the women's interweaving of homeownership and grown up identity.

4.2.3 Being committed

Alongside stories of independence and being in control, the women also tell stories of commitment. In these stories, the women demonstrate the ways in which the idea of commitment is intricately woven through their experiences of homeownership in ways that are understood to create and reflect their grown up status. The sense of commitment that emerges from the women's narratives is one that comes out of the social relations associated with home, and in turn, embeds them into the particular social and material relationships. As Caroline suggests:

> I think that when you buy somewhere and you decide to do all those things, you're making decisions about staying put for longer (Hannah: What sort of decisions do you mean?) oh god, there's so many .. erm ... where to live, whether you're happy with your job sort of counts too I think, and well .. who to live with and what your relationships mean, what sort of things you want to invest in I suppose .. god, yeah all the grown up decisions about your life and stuff, like, like, well .. like do you have a relationship that you are committed to enough to make an investment like having a house together, do you want to invest in your job and career here enough, erm to you want to invest in the area, is, I suppose, I mean are all the things, like your relationships and things, are they enough like what you would like, you know, are they what you want and if so, do you buy to keep them going?
> (Caroline Int#1:15)

In this extract of Caroline's story, homeownership represents a series of committed relationships – to her partner, to her job and to Edinburgh as a city. Caroline suggests that her homeownership both creates, and represents, a strand of commitment in her narrative; her home stands for her commitment to

particular relationships while at the same time fostering and deepening her commitment to those same relationships. Thus, the sense of commitment that runs through the story appears to be simultaneously a culmination of certain relationships, an investment in those relationships and a displaying of them. What Caroline also suggests is that this development and display of commitment is something that she associates with being grown up. She claims the decisions surrounding her entry in homeownership and her establishment of her home are decisions that are made by grown ups and as such the commitment that she chooses to make and show through her home, marks her out as being adult. In the following discussion I consider in more detail this mixture of development and display in the women's stories of commitment to show how it is woven through their experiences of home, homeownership and being grown up.

While Caroline characterises homeownership as being, in part, a web of commitment in which her relationships are those that grown ups have, this is not to suggest that commitment is exclusively the rite of grown ups. The women's narratives are alert to the relationships they have with the families within which they grew up and the ways in which they represent forms of commitment – both theirs to their parents and vice versa. However, the sense of commitment they mobilise in stories of their adult homes is one that involves a more complexly negotiated and nuanced system of reliance and reciprocity. It is the negotiations and nuances of the commitment involved with homeownership that create the particular sense of commitment that the women identify and leads them to associate them with adulthood. For example, Mary considers her homeownership to be an interweaving of relationships that require an understanding of commitment that she didn't have as a child:

> This is a big decision to take, to choose to buy a flat somewhere and with someone is a very big decision .. I mean, because there are so many things involved and, and on, I mean you get people involved in it all and it's not like, you know, when you're a kid and you have, you think I'll have my bedroom with this wallpaper or something and then your parent's say once it's on you can't change your mind [laughter] (Hannah: no, it does seem to be a bit more then that) you are making, and asking for, a lot of commitment ... (Hannah: and are those sorts of decisions and questions ones that

> only a grown up makes?) I, I, well in my experience yes ... it, they are ones that you just don't make in quite the same way when you are younger and the kind of commitments that you make when you buy your house, you know .. oh, to the bank, to Ryan and all of that, your partner .. they are adult, grown up kinds of commitments.
> (Mary Int#1:12)

Similarly, Laura draws a distinction between the idea of commitment that she experienced as a child and the one that she understands runs through her narrative of home:

> It is a different deal, really quite distinct, they are both home but one is where I am my parents' child and here I am with my husband and that makes it a different deal, marks out something different about me and about where I am with my life [....] I think the relationships, well, the relationships that you have are very different, what, like what you build your home around is different, oh, I mean ... like ... well you don't choose to live with your parents, do you know? Like you kind of end up there, and that is different from actively making the decision, making the commitment to someone and, god knows committing to the loan to buy the place, and that is different ... so, yeah, you follow the rules at home when you are a kid and that helps the home work out to be nice and all, but doing this, making this home ... buying this place, it is a series of decisions and relationships that make you make commitments to people in ways that you kind of don't when you are a kid.
> (Laura Int#1:11-12)

The commitment that Laura and Mary suggest runs through their understanding of home and their experience of homeownership is marked out as being different from that sense of commitment that they previously experienced. They both identify ways in which, as children, they appreciated the role that commitment – whether that is to a choice in wallpaper or the following of rules – played in their home lives. However, the commitments that they appreciate to be running through their experience of home as grown ups are ones that are deeper, larger and more complex than those they made to their bedroom wallpaper. As Finch and Mason (1993, also see Cheal, 2002; Dunscombe and Marsden, 1993) suggest, senses of commitment are often understood to alter across time and relationships as people sort and prioritise the expectations, and demands, they have of their committed relationships. The development of distinct, and grown

up, commitments, and the way these become apparent through the women's homeownership, therefore becomes one of the means – along with feelings of independence and control - through which Laura and Mary understand themselves as grown up.

As the women's stories of home and commitment develop, two main sets of relations emerge. Firstly, the relationship the women have to employment and their employers and secondly, and more profoundly, the relationship they have with their partners. As Caroline's story at the beginning of this section suggests, the women understand homeownership to simultaneously foster and reflect their senses of commitment to their employment work and intimate relationships. They speak of commitment through a number of stories that evoke metaphors of stability, connection, embeddedness, and reduced risk as a means of articulating their commitment to the relationships infusing their experience of home. These stories suggest that the women not only appreciate connections they perceive themselves to have but also those which others assume them to have by virtue of having their own homes. The stories of commitment are therefore a mixture of their own experiences and understandings and the sense they have of other people's understandings of commitment. The mesh that this creates, while sometimes undercut by the women, is one that is largely celebrated and embraced as being a means through which they realise a sense of being grown up.

Charlotte's story highlights the webs of home, commitment and employment that the women identify in developing stories of being grown up. When asked about the difference that becoming a homeowner meant to Charlotte she immediately made a link between her experience of homeownership and the idea that she is grown up enough to be committed to her current employment. She suggests:

> It is less like I'm the young and dippy wee lass who has just started working in the office ... people hear that I've got my own place and they think that there is more about me because I am grown up

> enough to have a flat and worth investing in because I'm not about to go flitting about like a student or young giddy thing, it's like owning a flat makes it that I am past that stage.
> (Charlotte Int#1:28)

Charlotte presents the ownership of her flat as a means of creating a narrative of her self-identity that is serious, stable and, as she suggests, worth investing in. Through her story of ownership, she embeds herself within relationships that she understands to be sustained over the longer term and these, in turn, embed her within employment and workplace relations. Thus, Charlotte's story suggests that her home, and her ownership of it, can be seen as a symbol of certainty and commitment. Being involved in homeownership effectively shadows the possibilities of impermanence, and the transitory relationship to employment this might foster. Thus, while Charlotte might be relatively young and might, so she thinks, be thought of a giddy and prone to flitting about, the anchor that her ownership represents overwrites this and creates, in its place, a story of stability and permanence that translates into commitment to her work.

Charlotte is not alone in linking her experience of being a homeowner with the idea of commitment. Both Nell and Caroline also talk of the way in which being involved in ownership creates a web of relations that can be understood to root them within their employment. As they suggest:

> Certainly owning property does give the veneer of stability to, a perceived veneer of stability and commitment, I mean it sort of has a responsibility attached to it that makes people think that you have made you mind up, you committed your future, at least for a bit, to being here, and working here and stuff.
> (Nell Int#2:22)

> The most basic way then that an employer probably looked at me as a more stable risk because I own property and so I'm less likely to move away and I think .. well, I think they think I am in it for the long haul, that, that the commitment that the flat is translates into commitment to the job.
> (Caroline Int#1:12)

In both Nell's and Caroline's narratives of home, their ownership is understood to create connections and commitments to their employment that has previously not been the case. Similarly to Charlotte, they evoke the sense of a mesh that

holds them in particular places and within particular workplaces because their homeownership requires them to commit time and money in order that they sustain their ownership. Simply put, taking on the responsibility of a mortgage means that there is an assumed need for the women to work and that the ownership of a specific home will mean that they will keep working in the same place. Owning therefore appears to develop a sense of commitment to work because of necessity but the commitment is largely experienced as developing feelings of maturity and being grown up that is of benefit to their work lives.

The interweaving of home and commitment to work can also be seen in stories that tell of their career development and promotions. Across the women's stories of home and work, the relationship between their ownership, the senses of commitment this is thought to generate and their work lives emerges as being important. For example:

> I work at a management level and when, I think that when I was being considered for the job I do now, 'cos like it was a promotion and I think that they did consider where I was at in my life, you more generally and, well .. 'cos I'm relatively young for the job, and I mean I'm a woman, the only one, but I think they thought that being tied into mortgages and having a settled home, you know I think that went in my favour.
> (Laura Int#3:11)

> One woman who works for my firm, she's getting married and her husband-to-be is on a BIG case that's about to start in Holland, and all the talk is about will she move out there to be with him, blah, blah ... you know, 'cos we don't have an office out there and so she was all worried that she would get squeezed out and so she put the ESPC [the Edinburgh Solicitor's Property Guide – a weekly listing of properties for sale] on her desk, put it about that she was buying and ... well, she's an associate now!
> (Nell Int#3:25)

> I wonder whether it acted in my favour slightly in getting this promotion, because I think that the perception is that I am more stable, that I'll be more likely to stay around ... it is the house and marriage double whammy thing I think, I am committed aren't I? I'm more likely to stay around and stay with them as a result and, well I can't say for sure but I've a feeling that having an established home life made me seem older, it gives an air of maturity and

> respectability and made them think that I am a better bet to get their money's worth.
> (Caroline Int#3:34)

These experiences suggest that ownership is a process that employers understand tie the women to their work in ways that other forms of tenure might not. The women suggest that their home lives represent a sense of them being settled and therefore more likely to offer an ongoing commitment to their employers. Homeownership therefore appears as a threshold in the narratives: through their ownership, and the commitment this is considered to involve, they are able to assert a narrative of themselves as grown up and this in turn creates new narratives of employment. As such, the women's stories can be read as a rite of passage through which, or beyond which, lie narratives of work that are wrapped around the feelings of being grown up that homeownership creates.

Narratives of commitment and the feelings of being grown up that are infused through these do not only revolve around the women's relationships with employment markets but also speak of their intimate and companionate relationships. Indeed, all of the women speak of their homeownership in terms of their relationship with their partners. Whether their ownership was undertaken with their partner from the outset – as with five of the women – or whether their ownership became a shared affair after the initial purchase – as is Charlotte's experience – the place of their relationship within their imagining of home is central. This is not unusual, as Nock (1995, also see Brown and Booth, 1996) suggests, varied as the paths to co-habitation might be, people do commonly identify the mutuality of sharing a home and commitment to a partner. What, in particular, is key in relation to the discussion here is that their homes are bound tightly to the sense of commitment they have to their intimate relationships. For example:

> This is me and Matthew, and this my adult place, this is the man who I am going to spend the rest of my life with ... that's, that is the leap, that is the difference.
> (Laura Int#2:29)

> Michael was more keen to get married than me, for me, for me buying this place, buying the flat is about the same kind of

> commitment ... choosing to live with him and set a home with, means that I couldn't be more committed, this is it for me.
> (Nell Int#2:7)
> Having a place of our own is all about being together and what it means to us to be together ... I don't think, like I never had a home with anyone else but Jack and I were serious about each other and having a home together shows that I think.
> (Grace Int#1:22)

> When you buy a home together that says something, doesn't it? When you make that sort of commitment you have to be serious about being committed to who you are with .. yeah, I think buying this flat and living here is a lot about my relationship with Ryan.
> (Mary Int#1:16)

The significance of ownership appears in these stories as a moment that marks out the step or, as Laura says, the leap across a line of commitment. This reflects the line that Dunscombe and Marsden (1995, also see Gurney, 1997) identify is drawn through people's relationships. They suggest that women entering co-ownership commonly identified their ownership as reifying and reasserting their commitment to a partner. Within these experiences, the home is characterised as an active symbol of the emotion that women are investing in their relationships. As such, homeownership becomes a significant moment in the women's personal narratives and the story of relationships that is held within the narratives.

The significance attached to homeownership is something that not only appears in retrospect but is also woven through the women's stories of expectation. In their discussions of home, the women often refer to what it is they expected from their home and their lives as they grew up. In these stories of expectation, the linking of home and commitment is often articulated alongside the idea of feeling grown up and becoming an adult. Consider, for example, Caroline's story:

> It [homeownership] goes along with getting married, having children, you know .. having a savings account ... I mean all the things that grown ups do .. having a person who you want to have a home with, I suppose I would look at people, people like my mum and dad, I suppose, and think that once I was grown up I

> would have all they have, the house and everything, because I suppose to me, to me that is what grown ups did.
> (Caroline Int#1:12)

Similarly, Charlotte discusses her expectations of grown up life:

> Getting together with someone and making a home with them, I think that was, it was ... it's a pretty powerful picture that most people, certainly that is what I thought it went like, you know when you get to be grown up you find someone who you love and you be with them in a nice house and live there and grow older there.
> (Charlotte Int#2:17)

The perceived correlation between home and a committed relationship therefore becomes a key strand in the web of grown up self-identity that the women construct. Both Caroline and Charlotte suggest being grown up can, in part, be characterised as having an intimate relationship and that the commitment involved in this relationship can be articulated through sharing a home. Thus, I would suggest, that the women's experiences of being grown up and held within a co-construction of the ideas of commitment, love and associated forms of relationships. What, I would also suggest, is evident in their stories is the way in which having grown up, committed relationships are strongly wedded to the understanding of home the women have.

In this way, the women's stories echo the suggestions made by Richards (1990) who identified the way in which the experience of homeownership is often incorporated into the rites and relationships that form the 'proper paths to family life' (1990, p95). In this, homeownership occupies a space into which people move when they pass into a new stage in their lives; thus, as the women grow up they move into relationships that in turn move into homes, which serve to mould, and express, their grown up narratives in particular – gendered and heterosexualised - ways. As Hochschild (1989) also suggests, homeownership and heterosexual marriage are often indivisible; the rhetoric of pervasive discourse overlays one on the other such that there is an expectation that all homes contain so-called traditional and nuclear families. The power of this in the stories of this research, can be seen in the way homeownership is normalised and incorporated within the women's narratives of being grown up.

Homeownership is understood to stem from, and in turn express, a particular form of committed, intimate relationship which is associated with being in a grown up part of their narratives of self-identity. The women's initial acceptance and celebration of this link creates the sense in which homeownership becomes a rites of passage through which they move in order to think of themselves, and be thought of, as grown up.

Throughout the stories, the women show alertness to the way in which their homeownership creates an impression, or reflects, the level of commitment that they have in various relationships. They also highlight the way in which their homeownership is a series of processes and relationships that is constitutive of their sense of commitment. In this sense, their homes are understood to be a culmination of commitment while at the same time being a means to realising deeper levels of commitment. In particular, the women discuss their relationships to employment and commitment within the relationships they have with their partners. These relationships are spoken of largely in positive terms and the way they are developed through homeownership is often celebrated. The women's stories of entering into homeownership can therefore be read for the way in which they are embraced as a passing into new, and grown up, strands of their narratives of self-identity.

In the discussion above, the women's stories about independence, control and commitment can be understood as creating a web which the women claim makes, and represents, their sense of being grown up. What can also be read in the stories is the way in which the women's experiences of home are interwoven through the various strands of this web of being grown up. In particular, the women weave stories of their entry into, and ongoing relationship with, homeownership through their discussions of being grown up. Homeownership appears in the stories to mark out a point of change, or distinction, in the women's narratives of self-identity. It is, in this sense, identified as a line over which the women pass, or 'rite of passage' through which they journey. In the stories I have highlighted above, the processes of homeownership are

characterised as being those that create new directions in the women's social relationships and geographies. Thus, through the financial demands of ownership the women claim a greater sense of independence, in managing their ownership they develop feelings of being in control, and their ownership represents new experiences and depths of commitment. These feelings are central to the stories of home that the women tell and are held at the centre of the celebration of being grown up that they find in their homeownership. So, stories of homeownership are positive ones in which the women seek, and seem to find, a narrative of being grown up that is full of achievement and affirmation.

4.3 The problems of being a homeowner: being a woman

I have suggested in the previous sections that the women's stories of home speak optimistically of the possibilities that their homeownership represents and contain celebratory narratives of being grown up. Initially situated within positive stories, the women represent their experiences of homeownership as being for the good. Their sense of being grown up may not always be complete, occasionally fluxing or dipping as events unfurl, but the link between homeownership and growing up is clearly embraced enthusiastically. This sense of enthusiasm does, however, become somewhat dampened as their stories develop and the sense they have of their homeownership becomes more complex and fractured. These fractures develop as the women consider in more detail the juxtaposition of their narratives of themselves as homeowners and their narratives of themselves as women. In the following discussion I want to show how these complications emerge in the stories about the negotiations involved in their co-ownership and co-habitation. These negotiations emerge in two differing sets of stories: the first set revolves around the impact of pervasive, and normalised, expectations of their homeownership, while the second considers their experiences of privacy within their homes. These stories are more subdued in tone than those that have gone before and the frustrations of realising what it is to be a home-owning woman cut across, and undermine, the more celebratory stories the narratives begin with. Thus, while homeownership is understood to

usher in a welcomed narrative of being grown up, the women's stories also represent the problematic gendering of this grown up narrative.

4.3.1 The difficulties of expectation

As the women's stories develop across the interviews, the pressure of expectation upon their narratives of home begins to emerge. Prominent amongst these expectations are stories of co-ownership and co-habitation. All of the women do actually share their homes with a partner, but the idea of co-habitation also exists within their narratives as a powerful expectation that serves to frame their experiences of home and of being grown up women. The idea of co-ownership and co-habitation can be found embedded within the women's own expectations of what their home lives would be. Grace, for example, suggests:

> When you grow up you find someone to live with .. I mean I also, I suppose I kind of assumed that you meet a bloke, like and you get married and you have a family home, don't you?
> (Grace Int#3:19)

Likewise, Caroline characterises her expectations of home in the following way:

> Back to when I was eighteen I suppose I would have some sort of fantasy about when I got married I'd have a house (laughs) you know, and a garden and x bedrooms probably, I mean I might not have expected a house like my parents but I think I would have imagined a house anyway, erm .... I mean, you can go right back to being a little child and I probably imagined, you know, having a mansion and being a princess in it or something (laughter).
> (Caroline Int#2:17)

Such expectations speak powerfully of the way in which narratives of home are co-constructed with a particular understanding of family relationships predicated upon homes being shared by a men and women. This is perhaps not surprising. As Allan and Crow (2001) suggest, household surveys from the decades through which the women grew up – the 1960s and 70s – demonstrate the dominance of marriage and family as a foundation to household form and homeownership. They also show the way in which, while co-habitation without marriage is increasingly prevalent, there are strong continuities with the past as large numbers of people live in households created as the result of an intimate relationship.

Such continuity is supported by the overlap between concepts of home and expectations of close, intimate and private relationships. This overlap, Bowlby, Gregory and Mckie (1997) suggest, has a strong hold on people's expectations of home and provides a framework over which they create their home lives. Hubbard (2000, also see Bernardes, 1987 and Morgan, 1996) likewise suggests that the ideology of home and family are tightly woven together and this results in landscapes of home as spaces of family relationships. This becomes a benchmark against which people are measured. To create, or to anticipate creating, a different kind of home is therefore marked out as somehow wrong or deficient. This difference, and the negativity associated with it, is apparent in Charlotte's narrative of home:

> Do you know, I don't think, you know I didn't really ever know anyone who lived alone really, well there were no single women living alone ... ah, no ... and this is really interesting, 'cos, yes there was one women and she was always, you know people all thought she was strange ... it was kind of like, oh you don't want to end up like poor old Miss Smith, 'cos, yeah we all thought she must be a bit peculiar.
> (Charlotte Int#3:15)

The full impact of this discourse becomes clear as Charlotte considers the impact this had upon her own housing choices:

> I do think that I would liked to have tried living alone, you know, you don't have to answer to anyone at all but, well I ... you do kind of think that there is something a bit odd about that, like poor Miss Smith I suppose ... and people think that you a bit kind of sad because you haven't, you can't find a bloke to share your life with, and that .. God, I mean I wouldn't want to think it stopped me but I know, well, I'm kind of glad that people won't think that of me you know ... it is kind of a balance between being seen as independent and being sad, I think.
> (Charlotte Int#3:16)

Interwoven discourses of home and family can clearly be heard in Charlotte's narrative. Her expectations of home are wrapped around the expectation of intimate co-habitation and this binding is made all the tighter when held up against Miss Smith. In marking Miss Smith out as being 'peculiar' and 'strange', Charlotte marks out the seeming wrongness that surrounds women living alone and the seeming rightness of having a home set within a series of familial

relationships. While her story marks the difference, Charlotte's narrative effectively normalises and silences the pervasive link between home and co-habitation with an intimate partner; it is Miss Smith's household and home that are held up as being odd rather than the other forms of household and home that Charlotte experiences. This silence is broken in Charlotte's later considerations, but concern at being marked out in a similar way to Miss Smith leads Charlotte to shy away from the possibilities of living alone.

Such concerns, I suggest, undercut the previous claims of independence that Charlotte suggests lie at the heart of becoming a homeowner. In earlier discussions, Charlotte heralded the independence that she found she could assert through her homeownership, and yet in the above story she problematises and turns away from that sense of independence. The oddness that marks out Miss Smith is held in a tense juxtaposition with Charlotte's imaginings of her own independence. To be seen as living alone becomes characterised as something that needs to be kept in check so that independence does not interfere with creating a 'proper' home. It is as if the oddness that surrounds living alone overshadows any feelings of independence to such an extent that they become understood as almost the same thing. Thus, the sense of independence that becomes celebrated is one that is safely situated and negotiated within co-habitation and partnership. The sense of independence that Charlotte, and the other women, claim therefore needs to be considered in the light of the pressures of the pervasive discourses of family, relationships and home and the way in which these are articulated in their expectations.

What Charlotte's story also seems to suggest is that this is a greater concern for women then men. Indeed, as her story continues she explicitly talks of the difference between her expectations of home and those she understands to work upon her brother:

> Is it easier for men to live alone?... my brother, he lives by himself and I, well I don't think that it is the same for him, I mean, what do I ... I mean I think people will look at him and see a young bachelor and that doesn't, I mean it isn't as laden down as the idea

> of being a spinster is it, like, so I think it is easier for men to live alone, maybe people might feel sorry for them but for a woman to do it, I think a lot of people still see that as being a strange and not what we would want to do.
> (Charlotte Int#3:16)

Similarly, Laura's story about buying furniture demonstrates the ways in which expectations of co-habitation are gendered:

> My sister, she went, well she lives alone and she went to get a new sofa and everywhere, literally Hannah, everywhere she went to look asked if her husband would, you know if she would be bringing her husband to look at the sofa but, and listen to this difference, I mean it is outrageous really, when Matthew went to get a new chair by himself the shop woman asked if his mother was going to check it over too! 'Cos, like he could just be getting it for himself but my sister .. well she HAS to have a man in tow doesn't she?
> (Laura Int#3:29)

Clearly, being a grown up woman creates a different relationship with home than being a grown up man. Charlotte's and Laura's stories suggest that discourses of co-habitation are felt more in women's narratives of home than men's narratives. As Gilroy (1994) highlights, cohabitation with a man is the main way in which women are assumed to undertake ownership and this assumption holds powerful sway over women's lives and housing experiences. She suggests that, in part, this is due to economic disparities between men and women, but that the impact of gendered ideologies of home and family cannot be underestimated. These ideologies result in homeownership and marriage being thought of as concomitant for women, an idea that is reflected in the narratives Laura and Charlotte present. Thus, they suggest that the expectation of cohabitation is larger for them than it might for men and that this, in turn, complicates their narratives of an independent self-identity in specifically gendered ways.

It is not, however, only the expectation of co-ownership and cohabitation that leaves a mark on the women's narratives. Throughout the women's discussions of home there are stories that tell of the pressure that their expected position in relation to household relationships creates upon them. It appears that once they

assume ownership, a series of expectations about their obligations and responsibilities regarding that home and household come into play. Caroline's story is illustrative of some of these expectations:

> I think, as far as other people are concerned, they think that erm, I will have less time because I'm married ... now I have a husband and a home to look after ... for example, the women who runs the ski trip is taking single girls and male teachers way on the trips and no married teachers, no sorry not no married teachers, but none of the young, married, women teachers are going ... and there is no logical reason ... so I think she has chosen them because she thinks that they have less commitments or something, or that they haven't got husbands at home who say why is my wife going away for a week, yeah, I really think that's what it is all about.
> (Caroline Int#2:25-26)

While her earlier stories spoke of the joys of growing up and taking on the responsibilities of homeownership, she finds that this is not the only 'rite of passage' that she has journeyed through. The expectation of the responsibilities of care that Caroline might take on within her household serves to mark her out in ways that she finds frustrating and restricting. Thus, while her home and relationship are a means to realising a grown up narrative of self-identity they also create a narrative of gendered costs. Having a home means that she must look after that home and this is done before other activities such as going on a school ski trip. Caroline's story therefore points to the ways in which pervasive expectations of her responsibilities as a home-owning woman undercut her own, optimistic, expectations of being a home-owning grown up.

4.3.2 The difficulties of privacy

The second set of stories illustrating the frustrations of being home-owing women revolve around the women's experiences of privacy. The ideas of home and privacy are powerfully linked in popular discourse; homes are often characterised as those spaces into which people can retreat from the pressures of their more 'public' lives. However, as I suggested in Chapter Two, the ideals informing constructions of home exist in tension with the lived experience that many women report. The day-to-day experiences of privacy that many women report can therefore be understood as disrupting the seemingly neat coupling between home and privacy (Munro and Madigan, 1999; 1993; also see Madigan

and Munro, 1999). The stories presented in this section speak of such complexities. Indeed, the women's narratives of home developed to contain stories of privacy that problematise their initial celebrations of ownership and of their home lives. In the discussion that follows I want to suggest that the women's stories of privacy ask questions of notions of intimacy, and of the way this becomes confused in discourses of home, in ways that undercut the women's previously celebratory stories of control and commitment.

When speaking about privacy the women most often constructed narratives of times and spaces in which they could be by themselves. As Mary suggests:

> Having a bit of time and space to myself, like I do need to, a bit of time alone ... yeah, where I won't be bothered and can just think through the day or quietly read or something, like switch off from things and, and be alone
> (Mary Int#2:15)

Claiming private time and space becomes conceived of as being able to get away from other people and pressures. The women generally hope to distance themselves from work – both paid and domestic – and also consider events, work through feeling and so on. The privacy sought is space and time in which they can be by themselves and be themselves; in private the women hope not to have to adhere to public expectations and demands, instead wishing for comfort and relaxation. Indeed, in their stories the women make many references to words and phrases such as 'comfy', 'letting it all hang out', 'just being yourself', 'no pretence', and 'having time off'. Charlotte's description of her private space and time also highlights just this restorative sense of privacy:

> It's like, your home and your private space is, like your artist's palette and all the things that you do are the different colours and you can mix it and you can, you know you can wash it again ... like, you go through the day and the palette gets all mixed with colours, browns and yellows and greens and whatever, and then you come home and you know, bit by bit some of the colours come off and then you are clean again ... and you, I think you need some private place to do, 'cos it is like your emotional washer or cleaner.
> (Charlotte Int#1:31)

Privacy is, therefore, firmly located within their home spaces. In their narratives Charlotte and Mary, along with the other women, characterise their homes as

being those spaces to which they retreat. Such an association is not unusual, and reflects the construction of home as a haven from work and public life (Saunders, 1990; Saunders and Williams, 1988). The women's construction of privacy appears in their narratives as processes of emotional work thought not suitable for public view and as such are situated within the seemingly private spaces of their home.

While the houses within which homes are found are characterised as being private, it is also true that different rooms of a house will be thought of as offering more or less privacy (Munro and Madigan, 1991; Ward, 1999). Common amongst the spaces claimed as private is the bedroom. Many of the women's stories of privacy cite their bedrooms as places within their homes that they can potentially escape from view and have some time to themselves. The bedroom is regarded as being the one area of a flat that visitors are not given access to and this creates a sense of being able to escape from the wider world. Laura explains:

> I definitely have public and private ... but in reality I have a very small really private areas which is just the bedroom ... pretty much people can go anywhere really, there's not a whole lot of private space, yeah, really it boils down to the bedroom, no one goes in there, that is mine and Matthew's space and the door is never open to other people.
> (Laura Int#1:9)

Other narratives also hold bedrooms to be the most private space in the house, for example:

> I suppose the most private room would be the bedroom, yeah, 'cos no one really goes in there, and, yeah I suppose if I really needed to get away from things I could go in there to do that.
> (Grace Int#2:27)

> The bedroom is a different kind of room I think .. it is, well it's away from view, it's the most private place really, isn't it and so you can get away from things and not have to worry about someone stumbling in and finding out what kind of mess you are in or what kind of little luxuries you like.
> (Nell Int#1:25)

> Somewhere where other people don't really go would be our bedroom, and so I suppose that is where you would have to go to be really private, you know, to be able to get away from the rest of the house and everything else that is going on.
> (Caroline Int#2:20)

Bedrooms are therefore thought of as spaces in which the women can claim privacy from those who visit the home. They are characterised as spaces where standards of tidiness may be less, very personal and intimate effects might be kept, and are often thought of as places where the intimacy of relationships is kept beyond the gaze of others. Such rooms are characterised in the women's narratives as places of retreat, as spaces that lie beyond the pressures of life outside. Indeed, for some of the women, their bedrooms are decorated and furnished with particular detail to comfort so that they might be places of luxury and indulgence, away from the demands of their wider lives.

However, while bedrooms are thought of as being the most private of spaces, they are also shared with a partner. Thus, while they are understood to be private spaces when considering the household as a whole, the women's narratives demonstrate the tensions that emerge when individual members of the household tell their experiences. Indeed, in their narratives, the women identify some of the challenges that sharing their private space presents them. Mary, for example, found that sharing her bedroom was a particular challenge when she began to live with her partner:

> It took me a long time to get used to always dressing in front of him and things like that ... and we would share space and all, but it was hard for me to get used to that level of sharing (Hannah: did you feel like your personal space was being invaded?) yes, that's a very good way of putting it, it was like my home is meant to be my personal, private space and here I am having to put my underwear on in front of someone.
> (Mary Int#2:21)

Grace also found sharing her bedroom, a space thought of as private, difficult:

> I find it hard not having enough private time and space compared to when I lived at my mum and dad's where I had my own room [...] that was one of the big changes, sharing space in quite the way we would have to, like you shut the door on your bedroom at your mum and dad's and it's shut, eh, you know... keep out signs and

> stuff (laughter) but here, Jack has as much right to be in here and I don't mind really but sometimes, yeah .. just sometimes I would want it all to myself, completely.
> (Grace Int#2:27)

This sharing, and the challenges the women face in the light of it, serves to highlight some of the tensions that appear in the women's narratives of home. There is a sense in which the privacy that they enjoy in their bedrooms is incomplete because they are not actually able to exclude everyone and everything. There is also a sense that the difficulty that Grace and Mary identify comes somewhat as a surprise to them. Sharing their home with a partner is an act of commitment and sharing which previously was sought and celebrated, however, the reality of that sharing appears harder to accept. They still clearly identify the desire to have space and time entirely to themselves and, while in previous homes their bedrooms afforded them this, in their current homes their bedrooms do not. It is, as Munro and Madigan (1999) suggests, a process of realising that the negotiation of household space often reflects the broader assumption about 'companionate' marriage and partnerships. Such assumptions lead to homes in which partners are thought of as sharing personal spaces on every level. While seemingly a celebration of the relationship, in reality this shrinking of private space can be difficult to actually live with.

The arrangement of space, as Mary's and Grace's stories suggest, can create tensions in the women's narratives because it can negate the possibilities for really personal and private space within the women's homes. However, I want to suggest that also of importance is the way in which the women's stories of privacy challenge their idea of intimacy and, in so doing, their celebrations of commitment. Morgan (1991, 1996) suggests that the idea of intimacy has become infused into people's narratives of marriage as the institution of marriage has evolved into being thought of as a marriage relationship. As such, heterosexual couplings - such as those the women in this research have - are now popularly thought of more in terms of love than economic alliances. In the light of this, a change in expectations that surround the relationships of marriage can also be observed. As Jamieson (1998, 1999) suggests, marriage is now often

characterised as being between two intimate and equal partners whom together construct and sustain their relationship through systems of personal and mutual disclosure. This weaving of intimacy and marriage, while seemingly attractive, does, Jamieson (1998, 1999) claims, serve to obfuscate the persistent inequalities that exist within most relationships. Within understanding of marriage that promote the idea of mutual disclosure, the gendered imbalance in work done within relationships therefore becomes shadowed and downplayed (Dryden, 1999; Duncombe and Marsden, 1993, 1995). This work can include many things, including housework, however, of particular interest in the context of this discussion is the idea of the emotional work that goes into a so called intimate relationship.

The women's stories of privacy highlight the confusion that the demands of intimacy can create within narratives of home. There are a number of stories that emerge through the narratives that speak of the way in which the women feel the burden of sharing falls disproportionately upon them. These stories, based around active attempts to claim private time and space are laced with feelings of discomfort and guilt as the women feel their need for privacy could be read as a lack of commitment. The confusion and tension that these feelings – of a need for privacy and guilt upon asserting that need - are illustrated in Nell's and Laura's stories of their arrival home from a day at work. On coming home from work they both like to have time alone in order to unwind from the day but doing this was not as easy as it might seem. As they suggest:

> Once you share a home that is where you go to and sometimes I need a bit of de-stress time and, well it happens because he cares, I know, but I was being a grumpy cow and he would try and make me feel better, like ' what can I do? ... make you a cup of tea?' ... and sometimes, oh, I wanted, I was like JUST LEAVE ME ALONE, but he was just being kind ... I had to allow him to be kind didn't I?
> (Nell Int#3:14)

> I can't lie and say that it doesn't create problems because working out alone time and space can be difficult (Hannah: in what way?) oh, god this makes me sound pathetic but, well, it's about hurting his feelings isn't it? Like, it's hard to say get out of my face ... he should be the one who I share it all with, you know what it's like,

> sharing things in marriage ... being giving, but I want to keep some things to myself and sometimes I feel bad about that.
> (Laura Int#3:31)

The women's stories suggest that while they feel the need to have time alone when they get in from work, acting upon that need makes them feel like they are being unfair to their partners. Claiming some private space is understood to be shutting their partners out of some part of their lives and this appears to be in contradiction to the understanding that they have of their intimate relationships.

As Nell's story develops she considers in some more detail the problems created when her desire for privacy and her understanding of intimacy are juxtaposed. She speaks of the idea of locking her partner out of rooms:

> I just do wish, really wish sometimes that I could go somewhere in the flat and know that he just wouldn't be able to come in and disturb me, so that, you know I could get a wee corner and know that he wasn't going to bother me if I need to be by myself and I don't want to talk about something ... but the only one with a lock is the bathroom door and you can only spend so much time on the loo before he thinks it is ridiculous or that he has done something wrong and defeats the object because then I have to, to do even more talking to make him feel better .. and all the time all I want is a bit of space to myself.
> (Nell Int#3:15)

> it is like, if I shut myself away then I am keeping things from him, like I am shutting him away from me ... ah, I just kind of think that living together and having a relationship like, you know a committed relationship like we do means that you share things that you feel and think but sometimes I'm not really thinking I suppose, I just need a bit of time but it kind of feels wrong to tell him just to leave me alone ... I mean he didn't, we didn't sign up for that kind of thing when we decided to be, live together.
> (Nell Int#3:15)

There is a strong sense in Nell's narrative that private time and space are in direct opposition to the sense of intimacy that she believes her relationship should have. Nell's feelings, and the burden of guilt they generate, are not necessarily all that unusual. As Jamieson (1998) points out, many people set up a series of expectations in their relationships that demand an ongoing commitment to disclosure and sharing that is unsustainable. Modern understandings of intimacy

can therefore lead to situations in which people feel as if they have failed when they choose to hold back some part of their day, feelings and so on. This may be all the more difficult for women to accept in their close relationships because it is women who are commonly thought to those most likely to engage in emotional sharing and dialogue (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993). In Nell's case it is therefore possible to understand her guilt as stemming from a failure to share her feelings appropriately with her partner and that she feels it so acutely because the expectation is that she would do more sharing than him. The result is that Nell's story provides a problematic undertone to her previous narratives of commitment and the way in which homeownership symbolised the strength of her intimate relationship.

4.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, I want to suggest that the transition into homeownership is a process that is experienced as simultaneously liberating and limiting. I have drawn upon narratives that tell of the feelings of independence, control and commitment that the women realise through their experiences of homeownership. These narratives of are ones of eager anticipation and welcomed experiences that are positively embraced by the women. When woven together, the various strands of their homeownership create a web through which the women identify a sense of being grown up. The idea of homeownership, and their subsequent undertaking of ownership, can therefore be understood as integral to the women's narratives of a grown up self-identity. The processes and relationships that make up homeownership appear in the stories to provide a pathway, or series of 'rites', through which the women see themselves as travelling. On one side of the line that homeownership represents lays the dense connections of childhood, on the other lie a new set of connections that create a grown up life and narrative of self-identity. The journey over this line, or through the 'rites' is not always entirely straight forward but, at least initially, is characterised by the women as being a good journey that is with each turn exciting and rewarding.

I have, however, also suggested that the weaving of homeownership and their grown up selves is not wholly unproblematic. To consider only the celebratory stories women tell of their homeownership is to ignore the considerable tensions that exist within their stories. Indeed, when the tensions that appear in their stories of expectation and privacy are taken into account, it becomes clear that the stories of home ownership are not only about what it is to be grown up but what it is to be a grown up woman. In these stories I would suggest that another set of 'rites' are at work. Not immediately present in the earlier stories, the women's tales of expectation and privacy illuminate the gendering of the pathways they travel into homeownership and being grown up. Thus, while homeownership is understood to create independence, the women realise that this independence is only accorded to them if they are actually part of a partnership. To be independent and live alone is to be strange, to live with a partner to be independent in a positive way.

Overall, I suggest that these stories can be read for the workings of social expectations of gender upon any one, 'private', experience of home. The women's stories create webs of social expectation that overlap and overlay experiences of homeownership and are suggestive of the powerful rendering of pervasive discourses of gender upon narratives of homes and self-identity. Holding all of these stories of transition, realisation and disappointment together can seem difficult as they emerge gradually and the ways in which they undercut each other are not always immediately apparent. However, by considering homeownership as a 'rites of passage' the complexity of the women's stories come together and usefully illuminates the gendering of their experience. As I suggested, 'rite of passage' are necessarily multiple and dynamic and in this multiplicity the variety of the women's stories can be held together in all of their dissonance. In this, the 'rites of passage' to being grown up that the women understand homeownership to represent, facilitates an appreciation of the complex journey they take into becoming a home-owning woman.

Chapter Five

Making home, re-making mother

> She [Laura's sister] was staying with us for a couple of days and she said, she was doing some work, she had bought these wicker chairs and she wanted to clean them, she went 'I must get an old toothbrush to clean them' and she went right to the, the sink and I thought 'how does she ever know that I would have an old toothbrush under the kitchen sink, just because mum does?' and I thought OH MY GOD I'M MY MOTHER! (Laughter)
> (Laura Int#2:6)

5.1 Introduction

Stories of mothers are central to the women's narratives of home. The figure of mother is intricately woven into the fabric and understanding of home in mundane and sometimes extraordinary ways. As the women buy their homes, decorate them, clean them, cook in them, read books or watch television their mothers – as a person and as popular discourse – move in and out of the material and social relationships of home. These appearances can be welcomed, but there is also a tension running through the narratives as the daughters try to realise and reconstruct a sense of 'woman' that both encompasses and moves beyond that of 'mother'. This chapter explores these tensions. In particular it will examine the overlapping ideas of home, woman and mother that emerge from the narratives and consider the implications of this fusion for the respondents' daily lives.

Feminist geographers have repeatedly called for examination of the complexities in women's narratives of home. They have shown that ideas and experiences of

home are woven across pervasive expectations and personal re-workings of such categories as gender (Bowlby, Gregory and McKie, 1997; Domosh, 1998; Hanson and Pratt, 1995; McKie, Bowlby and Gregory, 1999). This weaving of home is embedded within particular constructions of femininity and in turn serves to sustain, albeit at times problematically, that construction. As feminist literatures suggest, it is the patriarchal assumptions of feminine as maternal, caring and nurturing that creates the home as a feminised space of reproduction (Hayden, 1982; Spain, 1992). Narratives of home and of femininity can therefore be understood as enmeshed together in ways that, when unpacked, illuminate the socio-spatial patterns experienced by women.

In her experiential account of motherhood, Adrienne Rich (1986) evokes the shape and strictures of a circle. It is within the confines of this shape that she suggests a mother can be found; within this circle the activities, the relationships, patterns of consumption, ideals of love and care are evoked, enjoyed and imposed. The circle that she feels drawn about her is a tight one excluding people, places, personas and the possibilities of moving across and between these. At first it appears as if this geometric shape is bound about her by that person who perhaps most obviously marks her out as mother; it is her son to whom she ascribes the power to exclude other people from her social life and her from other spaces. As Rich writes:

> as soon as he felt me gliding into a world which did not include him, he would come to pull at my hand, ask for help, punch at the typewriter keys .... My singularity, my uniqueness in the world as *his mother* – perhaps more dimly also as a Woman – evoked a need vaster than any single human being could satisfy, except my loving continuously, unconditionally, from dawn to dark, and often in the middle of the night. (1986, p23-24)

The relationship between home and woman is synthesised through the figure of mother. Such synthesis is underpinned by discourses and narratives of homes, houses and households in which there is a gendered assumption of a domestic, 'private' role for women and a non-domestic, more 'public' role for men. The home is therefore seen as the place in which the dichotomised constructions of

gender overlay each other and this is demonstrated in the way that woman and home line up under the figure of mother. The following discussion considers this overlaying, or lining up, in three sections: firstly it considers the narratives in which the women come to recognise the figure of mother, both in their childhood and current homes; secondly it considers the women's strategies for resisting this overlaying; and thirdly it examines the difficulties the women had in mounting these challenges.

5.2 Recognising the figure of 'mother'

In all of the narratives that make up this research the home is the space within which 'mother' is found. The evocation of a mother figure, in both remembered stories and stories of anticipation, is strongly linked to the evocation of home; when telling stories of their lives as children, when remembering the roles that their mothers played, and when thinking about their own current lives and their expectations of the future, the women create spaces of home which simultaneously centre upon, and provide a centre for, the figure of 'mother'. Such a persistent and powerful intertwining is, as Bowlby, Gregory and McKie (1997, also see McKie, Bowlby and Gregory, 1999) suggest, illustrative of an overlaying of gendered discourses of womanhood onto discourses of home. In this section I want to examine the appearances that 'mother' figures make in stories of home and show how these are illustrative of a co-constructed, or fused, sense of the categories 'woman', 'home' and 'mother'.

5.2.1 Memories of mother at home

In telling stories of home the women create narratives into which their mothers are tightly woven. As they describe the idea of home, the figure of their mother quickly emerges as memories of the roles their mothers fulfilled and spaces that she occupied are incorporated into the ongoing experience of home. The place of mothers within the women's understandings of home is very clear and consistent: homes are where their mothers are to be found and mothering is what they are doing. As Charlotte and Laura suggest:

> Home and mum are virtually inseparable, when I think of where my parent's live now and my family home and of home as a child,

> home and mum are virtually inseparable ... she was the one who was taking us to school, ironing our shirts, making us tea, dealing with our homework, doing everything that home for a child means, walking the dogs [..] you know, cleaning the bathroom, everything, she literally used to do everything.
> (Charlotte Int#2:1)

> My mother was a home bird, always was, that, at home is where she always was, that is were I always think of her ... yeah, my mother was always about the house, decorating the place up for special treats and things, making it homely, yeah, that what she did really she made things homely, that what mum did .. mum was at home being homely.
> (Laura Int#2:13)

Such stories are common across narratives; mothers are painted with dusters in their hands, pots on the stove, advice on homework problems, ideas about decoration and so on. The mothers that are remembered and recreated in narratives of home are figures who are in the home, making the home, caring for those who live within it.

Caroline's memories of her childhood home, and her ongoing understanding of what home means is closely tied to her mother and the role that she fulfils. She positions her mother centrally within the day-to-day goings on of home and thus in her own sense of home:

> Without mum it would all fall apart really (Hannah: in what way?) well, for instance, like day-to-day she has always made sure that everything gets done, like ... well if I think back, and now really, she is the one that I associate with making home nice and a home really, food to eat, made beds and stuff, you know ... yeah, home and mum kind of go together, more than home and dad do, well like in a much more basic way really .. yeah, not that she was just about the dull stuff but without her home wouldn't have been a home really.
> (Caroline Int#2:23)

Just as in Laura and Charlotte's stories of their mothers, the home is the space into which Caroline puts her mother and in which she most immediately recognises the role her mother in her childhood household. Also similar is the overlaying of care onto the mother figure. This overlaying means that the women who mother are thought of as such because of the care they take of the

household; their centrality therefore in part results from the jobs of day-to-day maintenance they undertake.

Specifically, the women tell stories that position their mothers in the kitchen. When asked to expand on the relationship between homes and mothers all the women told stories in which their mothers were in the kitchen. It is from the kitchen that mothering women are understood to initiate and coordinate the home and the household; cooking, ironing, washing up, talking with their children, administrating medicine and cleaning scraped knees are all tasks undertaken by mothers and all from the kitchen. Caroline, for example, created a sense of the kitchen as being the place where she spent time with her mother and from where her mother did her mothering:

> You could get it all in the kitchen ... that was where we had tea when we got from school, clothes were ironed in there, you could tell mum things and she would listen while she made something to eat .. you know, it was where we were together for a bit, we just, well I spent time in there as a kid, time with mum.
> (Caroline Int#1:13)

Charlotte and Grace tell similar stories:

> the kitchen is very much the focal point and I always think of my mum there making it nice and you have your tea and mum's there and it's always a very friendly place because she's there making everything as it should be at home ... I think it's all about it being a place where you'll be got things, you know provided for, 'I'll provide for you in some way' and that was what mum did in the kitchen and so we congregated there, at her centre.
> (Charlotte Int#2:1)

> in the kitchen was the centre of it all, that is where mum would be ... that is where I think of her as being, you know she would always be there, for lunch time and when we got home from school ... it was like her place I suppose, it is where she ran things from.
> (Grace Int#3:26)

These narratives all place the kitchen centrally within the home and suggest that this centrality is linked to the place that their mothers take within it. The women tell stories of homes that are organised and cared for from the kitchen and these associations with care lead to the women associating their mothers with the kitchen. It is, as Craik (1989) suggests, the space of the kitchen that becomes

understood as the space within which the household relations are made and remade in such ways that cast women in mothering roles (also see Bordo, Klein & Silverman, 1998 for the way in which houses without a memory of the kitchen were symbolic of a mother who was unable to care for the household). Thus, there is a symbiosis between kitchens and mothers: kitchens are spaces that contain strong senses of home because that is where mothers are found and mothers are found in kitchens because they are understood to be the figure in which senses of homes are realised.

The position of mothers within the home, and within kitchens, is further embedded when they are compared with the stories of fathers. Across the narratives fathers are more transient and mobile than the mothers: their appearances are less frequent and they are less intricately woven into the day-to-to imaginings and experiences of home. Charlotte, for example, compares her parents' spaces within the home:

> Dad had a wee bothy kind of snug place in the house which was his, all with a desk and comfy chair and snug like and that was definitely his like, it was special to him and mum, well mum's spot was the kitchen where we would definitely be a lot of the time too 'cos she would do things for us there.
> (Charlotte Int#2:5)

Similarly, Grace's father is found on the edges of her narrative of home:

> He does do stuff I suppose, but you know, he was at work more and did all the outdoor stuff, the cars, the lawn and things so .... I do remember being there but but not all the time, not only at home ... I suppose he just wasn't at the heart of things, not doing all the things that mum did, I mean he was important but not the centre of it all like mum buzzing away in the kitchen all the time doing things.
> (Grace Int#3:5)

Grace's story places her father on the outside of the home – whether through work or through doing tasks outside the house – and is strongly contrasted with the very central position that she accords to her mother. Just as the women construct stories that construct the kitchen as the heart of the household and position their mothers within the heart of that, Grace points out that her father was not 'at the heart of things'. Her father's marginality, and the sense of

separateness that Charlotte remembers her father having, serves to highlight the way in which mothers are firmly embedded within the spaces and stories of home.

The narratives of mothers also suggest that women are embedded within the spaces and ideas of home through the role of care that they undertake. Amongst the stories of kitchens there are stories of tasks and chores that mothering women are remembered as having undertaken. Mothers are therefore remembered for the role of homemaking that they undertook. They are repeatedly cited as being engaged in caring for the household and their care is identified as being important in the sense of home that the women create in their narratives. It is difficult to separate the stories of mothers being at home and mothers carrying out particular roles within the home. As I suggest above the spaces and roles that mothers fulfil in the women's narratives of home are held closely together; in remembering mothers as being in kitchens they are simultaneously remembered as caring in the kitchen. Caroline, for example, describes her mother in the following way:

> When I think of her it is in the kitchen, and .. well that was because she was always in there doing stuff ... god, I suppose that makes her sound like she was always working and was downtrodden or something, and yeah, maybe she could never get out of there because, well that is where everything was done wasn't it really, that's where mum did her things, all the things that kept the house together, so it is an important place for her and for the rest of us so that we could have a nice home to grow up in (Caroline Int#1:14)

Caroline creates a space for her mother located within a domestic construction of woman. Her role within the home is one of care of that home and household.

Caroline is not alone in overlaying a role of care onto her mother and holding this centrally in her sense of home. Laura also spoke of her mother as the carer of the home and the household:

> she comes clucking round like a mother hen, she can't help herself, she's always caring, caring for my clothes when she thinks that I can't be bothered, always bustling about the house doling out care. (Laura Int#1:20)

This role of caring, and her mother's seeming happiness to do it, is the primary means by which Laura identified her mother. Her story continued:

> 'cos that is what she does, that is what she always did do and she does it to this day .. she does it and it seems that is what she does best, that makes it, everything right, I mean my mother doing everything that she does makes home such a great place.
> (Laura Int#1:20)

The role of care is therefore at the forefront of the memories that Laura has of home and continues to be important in the way that she feels about home. She continues to incorporate her mother's domestic role and tasks in her current sense of home, speaking of both the past and the present in her story. The sense in which her mother's role of caring at home continues to be a large factor in Laura's narrative becomes clear when she talks of her mother's visits to her own home:

> I'm awful when my mother is here, when she comes to visit me I'm so spoilt and she, she ... she's still got this tremendous maternal instinct and I let it wash through the place and let her take over the caring role from me, you know sort things out, make the tea and things, she just mothers and I let her do it.
> (Laura Int#1:25)

Her mother's position as carer within the home continues to have relevance for Laura and highlights the way in which narratives of home have narratives of women and of mothers deeply embedded within them.

The stories of mothers are illustrative of two aspects of the relationship between women and home: firstly, they spatially fix women in home spaces and, secondly, they fix women within the role of mother. The figure of mother that emerges in the stories above is, therefore, one that is both spatially and socially contained within the home spaces that the women remember. Indeed, I would suggest the image of mothers that is created through the narratives of home suggests the notion of woman as an 'angel of the home' (McDowell, 1999, p75). In evoking the idea of an 'angel', McDowell draws attention to the ways in which the home has been constructed and idealised as a locus of love and care; a space in which women can fulfil their, almost sacred, duty of caring for and nurturing the family. The idea of 'woman' becomes contained within home spaces, as it is

here that women fulfil their 'function' in relation to, and within, the cycle of economic production. The figure of mother told in the narratives is one that stands – although she seems to be in perpetual motion as she cares for her family – in the space that results from the ideological intersection of home and woman. The idea of women as 'angels of the home' blurs and obscures, perhaps even eradicates, the boundary between 'woman' and 'home' so that they become fused and in that fusion, confused. Also evident in the narratives is that sense is made of this fusion and confusion through the person of mother and the role that mothers played out at home; difficulties in drawing a line between 'woman' and 'home' as socio-spatial categories are, at least in part, solved by stretching the idea of 'mother', and the woman who was mothering, over both the idea of 'home' and 'woman'.

Integrating the idea of home as a geographical entity, one in which the social and the spatial wrap around each other, invites an understanding of the circle that Rich (1986) describes as not only an emotional and social description but also a spatial one; the four walls of the house contain, and bound off, the construction of 'woman' as 'mother'. The way that Rich articulates the feeling of social and spatial containment within the idea of mother can, I suggest, also be seen within the way the women inscribe the home upon their mothers. The category of mother appears to be remembered before all other people, places or experiences in narratives recalling the homes in which the women grew up. The home spaces that they tell of become configured through the figure of their mothers; it is through describing their mothers, outlining the tasks she carried out and remembering the relationship they had with her while living at home, that the women convey their idea of the home spaces.

Further to this, I would suggest that the memories that the women create in their narratives of home and mother serve to highlight the tightness of the circle which surrounds their understanding of their own mothers and of that which surrounds their understanding of the idea of mother as a social category. What is important is not only to see and understand the social and cultural processes of

those memories and that categorisation, but also to recognise the spatiality of those process. The identity that is ascribed to, or inscribed upon, women who mother, and the way this shapes women as processes of physical and emotional nurturance, is not only found in homes but is dependent upon the ideas of home. It is as if they are in a symbiotic relationship: the construction of home as a locus of love and nurture is fed by the construction of woman as an 'angel of the home' while simultaneously feeding into and sustaining such an idea of 'woman'. This overlaying of categories is a result of, and in turn results in, little space – or indeed the limited possibility of alternate spaces – for the idea of woman beyond that of mother. The woman who is involved in mothering therefore exists within a small and restricted circle the boundaries of which are determined by the physical walls of the houses in which homes are created.

5.2.2 Memories of mother beyond home

While mothers feature in narratives of home largely within privatised spaces of mothering, there are ways in which these women moved beyond the immediate care of family members and the home in which they dwelt. There are narratives that include periods of time when mothers worked in various positions of paid employment and these sections of the narratives tell of the possibilities and problems this might create for women who occupy spaces other than home and identities other than mother. What is evident in the narratives is that the challenges arise both in terms of how the daughters understand the negotiation between work and home to be played out and also in terms of them encompassing the multiple identities of their mothers that working patterns demand. This is not to suggest, however, that there is any sense of abandonment or failure on the part of the mothering women to be mothers, more a matter of finding spaces in which - or stretching the fields of possibility in order - to understand and appreciate an identity beyond that of mother.

In constructing chronologies of their mother's working lives it becomes clear that employment undertaken outside of the home is understood as a series of sacrifices, compromises and necessities that are largely dictated, or shaped, by

the idea of home and the household that lives within it. So while mothering women may have periodically worked as their children grew up, they are understood to have done so in response to household need rather than as a means of gaining and asserting some independence. In this way paid work undertaken by the maternal figure is often characterised as being an extension of the caring for home and family that women undertake (Hanson and Pratt, 1995; Stacey, 1990; Siltanen, 1986). It is as if the symbiotic construction of woman, home and mother is so strong as to distort and disguise the alternate spaces that women occupy when they work beyond the boundary of that co-construction. Indeed, it may be that the spaces that women occupy while working can be encompassed within those places that Dyck (1990) identifies as 'family places' in which women are perceived as constructing networks of both direct and indirect mothering.

Returning to Charlotte's narrative, she expresses the way in which her mum's work can be understood as an extension of her mother's mothering. She suggests:

> My mum's efforts were great really, the things she taught herself to do and the jobs that she coped with over the years to make sure that things were alright [...] I think, well I think that she got a lot out of it, maybe, yeah she feels achievement I'm sure, retraining and that but [...] it seems [...] I'm not sure if that is the whole story [...] all I know is that she was always there for us whether she was working or not and I suppose that now I think about it she was probably working for us too.
> (Charlotte Int#2:8)

Similarly, Grace constructs her mother's employment outwith of the home and household as being part of her mothering and as being tied into her role of caring for family members and the household:

> Oh, she did all sorts of things over the years, bits here and there ... I mean she didn't have a career as such really, I think, well, being at home was what she felt, you know having the extra money helps keep everything together and so she had her wee jobs, wee things in order to buy us stuff, like she used her wages to pay for a big disco party that I wanted when I was twelve [...] or she'd get something she wanted for the house but that was a bit extra, you know .. oh like a vase or a picture or something, something to

> make it nice and homely but that she didn't think, that we didn't really need, in that way then, yeah I suppose her working was working like dad did it, it was more about getting a little bit extra for family things.
> (Grace Int#3:7)

What, I suggest, is being worked through in these extracts is what the women's mothers' working meant in terms of their position within the household and how they compared to the ideology of mother. Both Charlotte and Grace suggest that their mothers' work was all about the family; it was driven by financial need within the household and was largely conceived of in terms of how fulfilling that need was a function of the care that their mothers undertook as a mother. There maybe some element of satisfaction and personal investment in undertaking paid employment – although Charlotte makes more reference to this than Grace – but this is not characterised as the primary motive behind working. Indeed, the idea of personal satisfaction in doing a job and having a career are subsumed under the burden of care for the household that is understood as being the driving force behind finding employment. Both women conclude that the spectre of mother is always there; the possibilities for their mothers to occupy spaces other than that of mother are squeezed and narrowed by conceiving of her work in terms of household need and as a function of the role of care they undertake as mothers. As Charlotte suggests:

> Mum would like, like, I have virtually, as far as I could see she never did anything for herself [...] it was always us three kids, always about us and the family and keeping our home together, it was about us and not her.
> (Charlotte Int#2:4)

While there is affection in these stories of mothers' work, there is also evidence of anger and frustration at the way mothers' lives were organised and lived. Running through the narratives there is a sense of the gap between the popular rhetoric of the 'cult of true womanhood' (England, 1991, p137) that constructs women as the centre of fulfilling domesticity and the reality of living within the tight framework that this creates. This gap is largely created by the dual role that women and mothers are expected to carry but are rarely given recognition for doing so. In this extract from Nell's narrative she tells of this frustration:

> The thing I realise now is that mum never seemed to get time off .. it is like her responsibilities are so orientated around the house and so it is always her job, and, and ... well I think we are all guilty of just, just assuming that home is her place and her thing and she will just get on and do it alongside any other job that she might do so, you know all the cooking and cleaning and stuff was always for her to do regardless, and I suppose now I feel a bit bad about that, about always expecting her to be doing home and family things and not recognising how stressful her work life was and dad, although he is better about it now, but really he still, you know, any little job is a big contribution and he really just lets mum keep on doing it all.
> (Nell Int1:26)

Nell therefore recognises the way in which she, and her dad, placed expectations of care upon her mother in such a way as to obscure the roles that she undertook outside of the home and the household structure. Nell's narrative suggests that to conceive of her mother's working as solely an extension of the caring mother role that she fulfilled at home meant that she was expected to maintain both her job and her home without help because that is what mothering meant. In the story of Nell's mother there is what Leonard (2001, also see England 1996; Hanson and Pratt, 1995) highlights as a failure to acknowledge the multiplicity of women's, and specifically mothers', lives as all of their activities are couched in terms of the care they foster for the home and household. Stories such as Nell's, therefore, negate the possibility of there being a 'double shift' – of paid work and house work (see Hochschild, 1989); women's paid employment is, instead, encompassed into a rhetoric of household care and, as such, maintains the placing of women within the category of mother and the space of the home.

Caroline's narrative also speaks of the pressures that her mother experiences in balancing her role as mother at home and woman at work. In this part of her narrative she explains the inequality she thinks exists between her mother and father and in so doing hints at her resentment of it:

> Although my mum worked on and off all through, you know when I was a child, she did work, but she definitely did the lions share of the housework, so even though she was working, well running a shop, she would come home and work some more, doing all the mum things [...] and my dad, like he is a very good cook but would only cook on special occasions [...] mainly because he

> wasn't home in time from work to do mum like things like cooking, so he would cook the Sunday joint or for a dinner party, but he did little to make mum's jobs dad's jobs.
> (Caroline Int#2:24)

Caroline's story conveys the unequal division of tasks between her mother and father and its lack of fairness as her mother was required to do both work outside the home and assume the major burden of household work. Caroline evokes a sense of her mother that roots her in a particular way within the household; this rooting means that while her paid work is recognised it is done so from within her role and spaces of mothering. It is her mother who is home in time to do the cooking and other household tasks while her father's position in paid employment is cited as a reason why he is unable to be home to fulfil such tasks. Thus, while Caroline identifies the way in which her mother was mobile across the boundaries of home through her working, there is a persistent interweaving of ideas of home and mother that problematises and restricts this mobility.

Caroline's narrative also speaks to the problems surrounding the relationship between the ideas of home and mother the boundary through the language that she uses. While she is talking of the inequality between her parents, she maintains that inequality by unconsciously situating her mother within the discourse of domesticity and the constructions of femininity that are associated with that discourse that she is seeking to problematise. Thus, while speaking of the spatial limitations placed upon women, Caroline also evokes a powerful rendering of the fixity of the categories of woman, home and mother through the language that she uses; the language which denotes some jobs as mum's jobs and some jobs as those belonging to dad serves to construct those jobs as just that. I would suggest that even when challenging the limited possibilities for a mother's socio-spatial mobility, the structures and categorisations that create those limitations are powerfully articulated.

5.2.3 Finding themselves at home

Narratives that speak of the idea and person of mother are not, however, only accounts of the women's own mothers and their memories of their mothers in

childhood. While being accounts of their mothers' lives, the stories retold above are also a context for those structures and strictures within which the women understand themselves to be currently living. The stories are, I suggest, a means through which the women consider their own experiences of home, of womanhood, and of the discourse of mother. The figure of their mother that is painted onto, and through, their understandings of home is one that is not only their own mother but is that figure which they increasingly recognise as now inscribed upon them in their own adult lives. The narratives can therefore be understood to be active in the present day; they are meaningful not only as memories of childhood but also in the way that they create the spaces in which current day experiences of the women are made and made sense of. Thus, the stories of mothers within childhood homes serve to underpin, or frame, their own, adult experiences of home and of womanhood and can be heard weaving their way through the narratives about the women's present day geographies.

This re-working of memories through current day experience is no more evident than in the women's narratives of their own housework. Issues of housework repeatedly arise and tell of the way in which the burden of household tasks is negotiated and undertaken. Most immediate in the stories is that the burden falls upon the women. The following extracts of narrative illustrate the continued doing of domestic tasks and housework by the women:

> I mean at the end of the day I'm the one who does all the housework here, he doesn't touch the house, he just comes in ... sleeps and eats in it and that's about it.
> (Grace Int#1:18)

> oh yeah, I do it really, well I do most of it ... it just seems to have turned out that way, maybe I have a lower dust tolerance level, I suppose but, yeah I do do most of the housework, it seems to come down to me.
> (Mary Int#1:19)

> I still do everything really, I can't remember the last time anyone else washed the floor or cleaned the bathroom and so I do it all.
> (Charlotte Int#2:11)

Without exception the women construct long and varied lists of the tasks that they undertake within the household. The tasks are common activities that are associated with the day-to-day up keep of a home and a household and include cooking, cleaning bathrooms, dusting, hovering, doing laundry and so on. As Laura suggests:

> Let's see .. the cooking, yeah I do that most days which I don't mind so much, but it is me most time that does the cooking, cleaning the bathroom .. always me, and like the clothes, it's me that sorts those out and, yeah, even though I try, you know low maintenance clothes that don't need iron [laughs], I do the endless piles of ironing .. I'd say dusting, now dusting is pretty low down the list of things to do but he would certainly never lift a finger to dust so when, it is me when it gets done and the hoover, he sees it, I mean it lives in his wee officey room, so he sees it but use it? Only at a push ... but he will do DIY without too much hassle and stuff .. but I suppose day-to-day stuff would be more me than him.
> (Laura Int#2:17)

These stories of housework clearly locate the women in their homes and show them to be very much engaged with the day-to-day domestic tasks. The echoes of their mothers' experiences are strong here: they remember their mothers taking responsibility for the household chores and they themselves do the same.

In part, assuming the major share of housework within their homes reflects a copying of the patterns of behaviour the women observed in their childhood homes. There is acknowledgement that they, in some sense, do the same as their mothers because that is what they are familiar with on a small, personal and seemingly private scale. Thus, as Caroline suggests:

> I've brought a lot of things with me from my mum, like tidiness and things like that, thinking about how a home should look and be.
> (Caroline Int#3:7)

> the ironing and the cooking and all that sort of thing, I mean, the, the iron ... I mean all of that comes from my mum, because that is what she did and that is what she still does and that is what she taught me women do, I mean by example.
> (Caroline Int#4:20)

Similarly, Laura considers her home and housework to be subject to her mother's home and housework:

> I suppose, I mean I've never really thought about why I do things the way that I do, but I suppose I do do things 'cos my mother did them, like the toothbrush incident [laughs] but I know that I clean the bathroom in the same way my mum did (Hannah: in what sort of way?) erm ... well roughly the same time interval, or I aim to do that, and then using a particular cleaner and clothes, scrub thing and I really never thought about it, but I know that if he were to do it, Matthew does it differently.
> (Laura Int#2:8)

The women look back to the homes that they grew up in as reference points for the idea of home and their role within it. The first reference point identified in the narratives is that their childhood homes were clean. This idea is mobilised by Laura and Caroline to construct a sense of home as being a place that is clean and tidy. The second reference point identified is that their mothers made the home clean and tidy and around this they construct their own narrative of housework. These reference points are brought together in the narratives to form a template of home life that the women copy; their mothers made the homes they grew up in clean and tidy and so they, likewise, make their current day homes clean and tidy.

The narratives do, however, also echo wider, more pervasive discourses of home and women's role within it. Thus, while it maybe that individual women copy their own mothers, their housework behaviours also reflect those discourses of femininity and domesticity that couple ideas of domestic care and women. The burden of housework that the women tell of can be understood to come out of, and simultaneously feed into constructions of the categories of home and woman that are tightly interwoven. In Caroline's stories of housework, for example, she not only tells of the influence her mother has on her home and housework, but of the expectation that she feels to keep her home in a particular way:

> Well, it's all part of having made it really isn't it [..] what does it mean to have a nice flat that you leave as a pigsty? I can never understand what people who do can be thinking really, why have somewhere really nice, work for it and aim for it and let all that go in how you look after it? Maybe when you're a student things are a bit less on-the-ball, but then that's not really your place is it, and there's not the same amount invested in it and it doesn't speak of as much of yourself as having your place does [..] like, oh god am I

> sounding like a woman possessed? [laughing] but like it is important to be clean isn't it, and, [..] yeah, I do, I do think it says something about who you are that's important.
> (Caroline Int#1:15)

Caroline's narrative suggests that she is alert to the ways in which the standard of cleanliness in her home is one way in which people, herself included, mark out her success as a homeowner and as a woman. To keep a clean household is to make a good home and in making a good home Caroline understands herself to be showing how successful she is as a homemaker, as a woman, and as an 'angel of the home'. Just as her memories of her mother position her within the home, caring and cleaning for the household, so too Caroline begins to recognise the ways in which she herself is similarly positioned. This recognition speaks powerfully of the way in which categories of home and woman continue to be co-constructed in ways that embed women into home spaces.

The positioning of women at home is also evident in stories that tell of the need to have their homes presentable. These stories create an impression that the women understand themselves to be more responsible for the way that their home looked; whether this be through decoration or through day-to-day upkeep, the narratives clearly serve to embed the women tightly within the homes that they are creating. This can be heard in the following extracts from narratives of housework and home:

> space to shove stuff so that people can't see the mess ... yeah, put the mess away so that the place looks nice and people could come by and the place would be alright for them to come into [laughs] living, living on the top floor means you've got time from when they buzz to when they get here and sometimes I will be running around making sure things look alright and then stand at the door trying not to look too breathless [laughter].
> (Laura Int#2:11)

> if people are coming round then it is nice to have a quick tidy round (Hannah: what do you do in a quick tidy?) oh, well clear the clutter, newspapers and stuff off the table, floor stuff like that .. erm, do the washing up, maybe make sure the loo and sink are clean (Hannah: why do you want to do the tidy?) well 'cos it is nice to have your home looking nice, you know messy desk, messy

> mind kind of thing I suppose, so messy, dirty house says something about you that isn't good.
> (Grace Int#1:27)

> it's about being seen as presentable isn't it? If someone comes round and buzzes on the buzzer it is about knowing they can just come up and everything will be alright and I won't be embarrassed about the state that I am in, the state the flat is in .. it doesn't have to be immaculate but clean and presentable .. that is what my mum always told me .. clean and presentable is what matters.
> (Charlotte Int#2:12)

> I kind of took on responsibility for everything, it was kind of the homemaker, housewife thing that you think you should do because people kind of, you know 'see me, see my home' kind of thing, you feel that it is something that you should do in a way that I just don't believe that Jonathon feels, that men in general really, that really men are made to feel.
> (Caroline Int#2:11)

These discussions echo research on women's housework that suggests women feel themselves to be judged on the standard of their housekeeping and the presentation of their homes (see for example Baxter, 2000, 1993; Chapman, 2002; Hunt, 1989). Making sure that the house is clean and, importantly, having a sense of obligation to keep the house clean, ties the women to housework tasks and embeds them within their homes. Caroline, in particular, highlights the way that the obligation for having a tidy and presentable home falls more upon her than her partner. This unevenness serves to highlight the pressures and pervasive discourses that create some sense of obligation toward their home and its upkeep. As the extracts of narrative above suggest, the sense of obligation stems from a relationship between women and home that lays one over the other in ways that generate fusions and confusions between the two.

5.2.4 Considering themselves as mothers

This fusion and confusion is embedded further into narratives of home when the women consider their own relationship to motherhood. At the beginning of the research none of the women had children, however the idea of motherhood is repeatedly discussed and their expectations of having children and the role they would subsequently fulfil weave through their narratives. Two strands of

narrative initially become clear as the women discuss motherhood; firstly, is the way in which the women identify motherhood as a role that they expect to fulfil in some way and secondly that these expectations place them firmly within their home spaces – whether that be in the ones they currently live in, or those that they anticipate living in. Grace's discussions of her plans for becoming a mother are illustrative of both of these strands:

> Having children is definitely part of the plan, yeah, I definitely want to have children and to be at home, be, I mean do the whole being at home and being a parent thing, I think, I mean for me, and this is only my opinion, erm, but I don't see the point of having children and them farming them off out to a nanny, and you know they are growing up under somebody else's roof, raising them in your own home is what it is partly about for me.
> (Grace Int#3:27)

In this Grace anticipates, indeed prioritises, having children and at the same time she positions herself centrally within the home assuming the role of mothering. As her story developed, Grace explained further the importance she places on being the primary carer of any children that she might have:

> Having them is about looking after them, and to do that you want to have a nice home, having a family home, I'll not work when I have a family, that is about being at home and being the one who makes that family .. if your kids are at home then that is where you are I think, if they need tea when they come in from school then that is what you should be able to get for them and that does only happen if you actually at home to do it ... Jack will do the work that brings in the money, like he does now really, and in a family home it will be me who does all the home stuff, looks after the children and things.
> (Grace Int#3:28)

In Grace's consideration of future family and children, her ideas of home, womanhood and mother are strongly intertwined, almost to the point at which they become indiscernible as separate entities. She identifies it as her role to be the primary carer for any children that she might have in the future and simultaneously constructs that care as being done within the spaces of the home. This spatial overlaying is articulated through the tasks of mothering; it is in the figure of mother that Grace anticipates herself to hold that she is positioned within the home carrying out the role of mothering. Indeed, she suggests that to employ someone else to care for any children that she might have would be to

have them growing up under someone else's roof, suggesting that this would fracture the realisation of home that comes when women take on the role of mother.

For Mary, the stories of anticipation and expectation became more immediate as the research progressed because she became pregnant and had her first child before her involvement with me ended. Mary's narratives of pregnancy and motherhood speak of how the fusion of the idea of home and women occurred as she became a mother. She suggests that she became very much aware of this when she began her maternity leave:

> I am here a lot more I suppose, but it is, there is more than just, I mean it's like people talk to me a lot about feathering the nest and nesting and becoming homely (Hannah: and have you been doing much?) well, I wasn't planning to but now I almost feel like I should 'cos that is what everyone is always saying to me.
> (Mary Int#3:8)

Mary suggests that her association with home is, in part, a result of spending more time there but it is also clear in the extract above that the overlapping of her narratives of home and her sense of identity and womanhood is constructed through the idea of mother and the role of mothering. It is the idea of women mothering that positions her within the idea of home and this results in the spatial experience of being at home that she relates. As her story progressed and she had her child, Mary's sense of being embedded within her home space becomes more marked. She tells of her experience in the following extracts:

> It's all very based around home right now, getting out anywhere is a bit of an operation really and then I've always forgotten something, left it at home .. and well, in reality breastfeeding kind of keeps you at home, or at least close to the baby because he needs to be fed and you have to kind of be there for that and .... erm, at the start it is so hard to get out of the house because it seems to take so much planning.
> (Mary Int#4:9)

> I have been out on my own, but all the time it is a case of when will I have to get back to feed or something, so you do, you know, have, your brain is always at home, you can't leave being a mother behind you when you go out, you know, it's not just about leaving it at home when you close the door, it follows you everywhere and

> that is unique to me, to women I think not that, well not that Ryan doesn't always think about being a father but it isn't so basic and everyday, you know he doesn't have to think about giving Tim food in the same way that I do, you know so in that way it is more a thing that I feel than Ryan, I think.
> (Mary Int#4:12)

Mary's sense of being tied to home and the role of care is brought into focus when she considers the impact that breastfeeding has upon her. The impact of feeding upon women's mobility around and beyond the home can be considerable and, as Mahon-Daly and Andrews (2002) suggest, often leads to a considerable re-negotiation of their movements through space in a way that is not as marked for men on becoming fathers. The immediacy of feeding and the way in which this keeps her close to her child has, in Mary's experience, led to her understanding herself to be deeply embedded within the spaces and role of mothering. The practicalities of being the primary carer of her child does tie her to home in ways that Mary does not feel her partner is tied: she speaks of her basic and everyday structures and responsibilities of childcare – such as breastfeeding – as being those which keep her at, or close to, home while he has a more distant and flexible relationship to their home space. Located within the tasks of mothering and the space of home, Mary has a more restricted mobility across space and roles commonly felt by women (Gregson and Lowe, 1995; Hanson and Pratt, 1995; Holloway, 1998). These stories of restriction are also similar to the restricted stories of home and mothers that the women remember in earlier narratives. Thus, Mary's narrative is illustrative of the continued social and spatial limits created by the interweaving of ideas of home, woman and mother and the tight circle that this binds around women.

The recognition of 'mother' across the narratives is a powerful and problematic one. Remembering the role that their mother's played within their childhood involves realising the restrictions within which their mothers lived and the all encompassing idea of 'mother' that women often live within. The narratives recounted in this section have also shown that the women are beginning to see similarities in the role that they play in their current day homes. This recognition sharpens the awareness they have of the ways in which the

discourses of woman, home and mother overlap in powerful and persistent ways. The stories of their mothers locate them firmly within home spaces and within nurturing roles and, in realising that their own position is perhaps not all that different the women, begin to see the restrictions that this places upon women. Their discussions of housework and their own mothering demonstrate the impact that the fusions and confusions of the pervasive ideas of home, woman and mother. Thus, the stories of mother are ones that revolve around the idea of home and leave little time or space in which women can move beyond the home and the care that they provide within it.

5.3 Resisting and reconstructing mother

Alongside the narratives of recognition, the women tell stories of the ways in which they challenge the roles that they and their mothers take on within the home. Thus, stories of home and mother are, in part, ones of resistance in which the women explore the ways in which they try to change the pattern of behaviour that sustains the restrictive relationship between women and home. These stories of resistance develop along two main strands, each of which will be addressed in this section. Firstly, the women tell of their re-negotiations of housework and their attempts at readdressing the burden of domestic tasks within their adult homes. Secondly, they discuss the way in which the women attempt to construct and claim a sense of home that is more flexible and permeable then that which their mothers lived in. These challenges to persistent and pervasive discourse are not, however, without problems and I conclude this section by considering the problems associated with the negotiations the women undertake.

5.3.1 Re-negotiating house-'work'

In the previous section I highlighted the narratives of housework that the women create. These tell of the burden that housework puts upon the women; they construct housework as being an obligation that stems from their mothers' example and from pervasive discourses of women and their role within the home. These obligations are not, however, accepted unproblematically and the

narratives of housework also demonstrate reluctance amongst the women to undertake domestic tasks. As Nell and Mary suggest:

> Who wants to spend their time off locked away at home cleaning? But, I mean if you want it clean, you know if you want to be in a nice home then it has to be done doesn't it so, yeah it means, I, I have to spend a bit of time at the weekends usually doing housework which is a REAL drag.
> (Nell Int#3:24)

> It is the most boring thing, it is isn't it? And, it's one of those things, isn't it, 'cos you've got to do it, it takes for ever, you know I think, well I think I'll just quickly do the hoovering or something and then it takes FOREVER and it feels like it just takes forever and it is so boring.
> (Mary Int#1:22)

Housework is therefore characterised as being an imposition that is both time consuming and tedious. The extracts above suggest that doing domestic tasks is something that has to be done after work but before leisure and as such is constructed as being additional work that causes the women to miss out on more leisurely and pleasurable activities. This is different to the narratives of their mothers' domestic work in that the women characterise their mothers' housework as being more easily accepted. Thus, while Nell and Mary talk of the boring burden of housework they undertake, they associate their mothers' housework with warmth, care and love. This is not to suggest that they do not think their mothers worked hard or that the housework was not time consuming, but they do not speak of that hard work with the same frustration that characterises the narratives of their own housework. This difference in outlook to housework is, I suggest, the first means by which the women resist and challenge the fusion of home and woman.

The change in tone represents a challenge because it breaks away from the acceptance that they understand their mothers had for the housework that they had undertaken. In the narratives of the previous section, the women show their mothers to be at the centre of domestic activity, however the narratives of their current homes show that they do not want to be at that same centre. To illustrate this further, I suggest that listening to Laura's narrative is useful; in

discussing housework, Laura offers a stark contrast between the way in which she remembers her mother embracing a domestic role and her own reluctance to do so:

> My mum's house has always been pretty much spotless but it, if she was doing it maybe she did it when we were at school ... it's interesting and I must ask her, but she must have just had her day organised so that I never really saw her do those things .. and she, you know she would still find time to play with us, you know doing all those fun things with me as well, even in the evenings I don't remember her being exhausted or anything, and it was a lot of work for her, I know, but you wouldn't really know it ... really effortless.
> (Laura Int#4:11)

> I do really resent having to do too much, I mean I do quite enjoy cooking but only if I am in the mood and really to do something treaty, you know, like a cake or something .. but, God, you know you get home from work and the hoovering needs to be done and, well, you must think this yourself, don't you, but it is such an effort to do it, like it is the last thing really I want to do when I get home from work, or worse do it before I go to work, God feeling that you have to do it then is just awful.
> (Laura Int#2:21)

In these two accounts there is both a change in tone and a contrast in the way in which Laura characterises her own and her mother's position in relation to housework. Laura constructs her mother in a single space and single role; she is at home and does caring work for the household. In this singularity, Laura conveys a certain sense of harmony as her mother appears to effortlessly carry on the demands made of women at home. Laura acknowledges that her mother would have done a lot of housework, but suggests that this was never noticeable because her mother did it successfully and without complaint. In her own home, however, Laura constructs housework as clashing with her life and the roles that she takes across a series of spaces that lie within and beyond home. While Laura understands her mother to be seamlessly, and effortlessly, at the centre of the idea of home as it is made through housework, she understands herself to be very much at odds with that same, symbiotic, relationship. Thus, I would suggest, that characterising her own relationship with housework very differently from –

and at odds with - the relationship her mother had with household work does represent a fracturing of the links between Laura's ideas of home and woman.

Fracturing the links between the ideas of home and of woman continues to appear through the narratives of housework as at points the women refuse to adopt the role and label of housewife. Caroline puts it most bluntly:

> This is the nineties and I'm not going to be a housewife.
> (Caroline Int#2:23)

This goes beyond the changes in tone identified above and explicitly rejects the embedding of women in home spaces and home making roles. Commonly the women sought ways to move beyond the coupling of woman and home that is understood in the term housewife and the work that lies behind that term. Thus, while acknowledging they undertook the majority of the household tasks, the women did not want that to lead to an understanding of them as housewives. Caroline explained further:

> I am not the wee wifey at home ... I go out to work and that is important and yes, I do stuff at home 'cos lets face it someone has to and Jonathon doesn't rush to do stuff, but I'm not a housewife .. I am much more than that, I mean well, like I go out and do a job and I go out to do my dancing and I and go out and do other things like my singing and all those things and that is what I am about before I want to be known as a housewife.
> (Caroline Int#2:23)

In Caroline's narrative, she clearly chooses to identify herself through a variety of activities and a number of spaces. These include, but are not exclusive to, her home and the housework that she undertakes. She identifies herself as being the person who undertakes the majority of household tasks but does not accept that this makes her a housewife. Instead, she highlights her job, and the leisure activities that she takes part in, as a means to representing a more mobile and varied narrative of self-identity than she understands the label housewife to accommodate. She repeatedly breaks through the discourse that creates ideas of home and woman by representing herself as going out of the home to spaces beyond the home and the household tasks that reside within it. In this, Caroline recognises the social and spatial limitations created by the idea of a housewife and, in refusing to adopt that role and identification, resists the discourses of

femininity and domesticity that create the housewife and locate her within home spaces.

This refusal to accept the role of housewife is sustained in two ways. Firstly, the narratives suggest that redistribution of household tasks is an important means of breaking away from the role of housewife. Negotiating the distribution of housework is a process that all the women discuss and is understood to be ongoing. Often negotiations over housework are begun as a means to redress an imbalance that has developed over time without the women particularly noticing until the burden becomes difficult to bear. Caroline's narrative provides a good illustration of this:

> When we first moved in and it was my flat, and I'm sure a lot of women do this [...] but I kind of took on responsibility for everything that you think you should do and I then quite quickly got fed up with it and we went a series of, you know, arguments and rows about who was doing what and when.
> (Caroline Int#2:11)

Likewise, Nell found that a routine developed that became unsustainable and which led to her taking action to redistribute household tasks:

> I think the, the arrangement just kind of developed, at the time we first moved in I was working really long hours and so he would make sure there was a clean, ironed shirt for me the next day and to begin with that was really great but then I kind of, well I realised that he was really pleased to be doing it, but then he wasn't doing anything else even though I didn't have time to clean anything so it was a case of do it or it stayed dirty or we ate take away or something, and I suppose he doesn't like to cook, but in some sense that was like the tip of iceburg and I realised that thinking he was really good to be ironing me a shirt wasn't enough really and so we went into serious negotiation I suppose.
> (Nell Int#1:24)

These negotiations involve the women thinking through all that needs to be done around the house and considering who should do what. The narratives suggest that these negotiations mainly revolved around individuals' predispositions to undertake particular tasks. Caroline represented her negotiations in the following way:

> It was really a case of finding things, getting the things that he would like to do otherwise I figured that he wouldn't do them and

> what is the point of forcing things, you know (HA: so what does he not mind doing?) he likes to cook, yeah cooking is something he doesn't mind doing and so I said well you cook and do the washing up and I'll do the cleaning and the laundry and the ironing and stuff.
> (Caroline Int#2:13)

Nell's negotiations proceeded in a similar fashion but with different results:

> He had already shown he didn't mind doing the ironing and doing laundry so, it was well let's build on that and I made it his definite task and so now I have a laundry fairy (laughs) and there are always clean and ironed things for me, but he, cooking makes him really stressed and so I do that (HA: and the cleaning?) ah, I do most of it still but we do have an arrangement to alternate doing it.
> (Nell Int#1:25)

These negotiations stand in contrast to the household arrangements that both Caroline and Nell remember from their childhood homes and are important in them resisting the total immersion within home spaces that their mothers were thought to live through. Getting their partners to undertake domestic tasks shifts some of the burden of housework and potentially makes it easier for the women to realise the mobility across space and roles that they aspire to. Co-opting their partners in this way therefore both recognises and supports the need the women have for a looser weaving of the discourses of home and woman in order to sustain their work, leisure and home lives in the way they want.

The second strategy the women discuss for re-negotiating household work is the possibilities of constructing housework and motherhood as a job. This idea is bought up a number of times in various narratives and is mobilised by the women as a means to cut across the discourse of naturalness that reinforces the links between women and home. Nell suggests:

> We haven't discussed it really but Michael should pay me as a means to making sure neither of us assume things about the house and doing housework and stuff like my dad did with my mum ... I mean really the state should pay, I kind of think that women who choose to be at home and work to bring up their children in the house are recognised as doing that .. but it won't and so we will have to do it on a small scale, between us.
> (Nell Int#2:8)

Constructing household work and the tasks of mothering as a job which is distinct from the idea of home is the means by which Nell might be able to continue asserting herself as independent of home, despite spending time there providing household and childcare. As Nell suggests, recognising such care as a job undermines the assumption that women naturally take on these roles and therefore offers a resistance to the interweaving of home, woman and mother that often restricts women to home based roles.

Laura too looks to the idea of homemaking as a job. In her narrative of home she constructs her own mothers work within the home as a job and looks to this as a means to manage her own relationship with home:

> you know in a kind of way, my mother saw staying at home and looking after us as a job which is what it should be [..] I think that her view of home was, you know, to fulfil that job which was probably a bit before her time really to make it a job and not just the natural thing, it was her job and I would like to think that if I were at home all the time that it would be because we decided that would be my job for a while .. yeah, I think that having it really recognised as a job would make me feel easier about it 'cos it would make me feel less like I was just stuck there away from everything else.
> (Laura Int#4:5)

Laura's story suggests that the concept of work and of having a job is an important one for her and that laying this over the work that she might do at home is a way of holding onto that importance. Thus, it becomes a choice just as choosing a job in a separate work place would be; to be at home and to be mothering is therefore not a seemingly natural consequence of being a woman but is an active choice that Laura might make. Laura also suggests that characterising the household work as a job means that it is possible to maintain a sense of mobility beyond the idea of home thus reducing the sense that women are embedded within homes in ways that restrict them from other spaces and roles. The recognition of housework as being work is important because it challenges the relationship between home and woman and the idea that homemaking is duty for women. It creates a sense of function and constructs housework as being a means of production rather than as a hidden means of

reproduction and as such attempts to create status for the work and for them as women who might do it.

What is also of interest in these narratives is that both women construct housework as work only in the absence of other kinds of employment that they might undertake. For both Laura and Nell, their appeal to be recognised as working when carrying out household tasks is bought into focus by the idea that they would stop working elsewhere upon having children. Grace's narrative is another example of this:

> keeping the house is my part of the partnership if you like, it is a decision that we have made together and so if I do that full time, like when we have children then Jack will pay me a salary to do it, 'cos it is my job and each month then I would have some sort of salary (HA: and would that be the same as housekeeping?) no, because housekeeping is for the house, it would be a kind of wage because it would be my job, it might be traditional to spilt it that way but it being a job stops me from feeling like a little housewife (HA: and at the moment 'cos you have a job outside the home he doesn't do that?) well no, because I have an income of my own and a job that pays me.
> (Grace Int#2:7)

In this extract, Grace clearly evokes the idea of housework being a job: she uses words such as partnership, salary, wage and job when discussing the way that her household arrangements might work. She states that constructing housework and homemaking as a job, and being remunerated appropriately for that, is an important way of recognising its value and of maintaining her sense of status. However, she also clearly states that being paid to do housework would only happen when she stops having other forms of employment. The narratives therefore suggests that the idea of being paid to carry out caring tasks within the household is closely tied to women exclusively performing the role of mother within their homes. While they continue to do a 'double shift' of paid work outside the home and domestic work the latter remains, at least in part, to be hidden labour (Hoshchild, 1989). Despite the potential challenge that constructing household tasks as a job raises, the narratives suggest that the care that women take over their homes remains largely unrecognised because it is obscured by the fusion and confusion of home, woman and mother.

5.3.2 Moving beyond the boundaries of home

The narratives also suggest that the women use the idea of mobility across the boundaries of home as a means to challenge the relationship between home and woman and the way it is articulated in a mother figure. Across the narratives, the women assert their presence in spaces other then their homes and their participation in roles other than that of homemaker and carer. Caroline, for example, suggests:

> If you asked me to describe myself I would say a teacher first, I mean to me being married and living here with Jonathon is very important and does define to an extent but in some ways it makes no difference, well no, it does matter obviously and I do have a different lifestyle than before but I've not changed, work hasn't changed, I am still the same and I can still do the same things, I would do, I can still do a whole heap of things.
> (Caroline Int#2:25)

She very clearly constructs a narrative that moves across spaces and roles: she prioritises her job as a means of describing herself but is also keen to suggest that she moves between spaces and roles as and when she wants to. Caroline's refusal to accept limitations to her socio-spatial mobility is in contrast, and challenge, to the more home based life she understands her mother to have led. As she explains:

> My mum never goes to play golf or maybe to the pub with my dad, she always stays at home, separate, doing separate things and I like to think of myself as stepping over the divide between doing things as a housewife and going to other places and doing other things ... you know, I think it is that my mum sees the restrictions of being a woman with a home to look after and I see them too but can't accept them in the way she does.
> (Caroline Int#3:11)

Caroline's narratives therefore shows a conscious effort to define herself as participating in, and moving between, a number of different spaces and identities. She recognises the powerful intervention that the co-construction of categories has upon her mother and that her mother's movement across boundaries into spaces beyond home is restricted as a result and seeks ways to redress that balance. In part she does this by prioritising her job as a means of identification and in part she does it by asserting her right to move between various subject positions and by, as she puts it, stepping over the divide.

Charlotte's narrative is also demonstrative of resistance to a fixing of home, woman and mother. In her narrative she discusses the way in which her mother regards Charlotte's current day life and her relationship with her home:

> I think that she sort of, well she's a bit wistful about it I think and she sort of thinks that good on me you know ... I mean she sees that I am determined to have a good job and to keep that going and that I get a lot of satisfaction, and independence yeah, I think she values my independence for me .. you know, 'cos like I've said before I think everything she did was for us, like virtually .. it was always about us and not her whereas I do things for me and not just because I've got school uniforms or trips to pay for, you know I don't work just to keep the house going in the way she had to and that is different and I think she envies me that, not, like not in a bad way but envies it 'cos it is very different.
> (Charlotte Int#2:4)

Charlotte's narrative describes a very different sense of socio-spatial mobility than that which her mother enjoyed. As I have suggested earlier, and as Charlotte highlights here, her mother's movement through spaces of work was understood to be a function of household upkeep. Her own movement into work spaces is however characterised as being part of her independence; Charlotte therefore creates a narrative of herself as being beyond home and beyond the fixity of category that meant her mother worked only through the web of care and mothering. Charlotte's narrative of working, and her mother's envy of this, does therefore offer a challenge to the way in which women can be embedded within home spaces because it asserts a sense of her working as standing outside of the home completely rather than being driven by household need. This is not to suggest that the income generated by Charlotte's work is not used to pay the mortgage, for example, but what is apparent to her is that Charlotte's movement through spaces of work is a separate narrative to that of her home space in a way that her mother's is not.

Narratives of home that also offer resistance to the co-constructed idea of home, woman and mother are those that reconstruct home as a haven. This idea is a change from those narratives that recognise the tightness of boundaries around the home by recreating it as a space for relaxation for the women. The following extracts of narrative explain what home as haven means to the women:

> Of course there are times when you come in and you've had a horrendous day and you want to come in and shut the door, put a CD on, light your aromatherapy candle and ... you know, just aaaaaah.
> (Nell Int#1:19)

> This is the place to have fun right, I mean home is about being at play not always doing, doing, I mean I work really hard at work and at home I want to stop doing that and just be comfortable and perhaps have some fun, just get away from the pressures.
> (Laura Int#3:31)

> Somewhere to escape from it all really, I suppose that is what I want from a home, you know just to be able to escape and put your feet up and relax.
> (Grace Int#1:17)

These offer resistance because they change the way in which the women construct their home spaces. In the narratives which tell of their mothers, the women are acutely aware of the way in which the home is a space of work and care and that this creates pressures. The above narratives challenge this because they move beyond the idea of the home as being a place in which women create centres of care and position them as spaces within which women relax and escape work. This is not necessarily easy, as the women's discussions of their own housework testify, to do but as an aim to can be understood to challenge traditional relationships between woman and home.

5.3.3 Guilt, inadequacy and expectation

While the women tell of the ways in which they attempt to resist the weaving of woman and home through the figure of mother, these challenges are not always easy to realise. Common through the narratives are instances in which the women find their strategies and challenges are surrounded by tension and by obstacles as the pervasive and continued power of the fusion earlier identified surrounds the women's attempts to break through the boundaries they feel around them. These difficulties are largely expressed through stories that tell of guilt and senses of inadequacy that the women are not able to manage their homes and the many movements beyond home that they make. Such feelings arise from several sources, being in part the force of popular and legislative

discourses, but most troubling for the women is that their own mothers impose systems and structures of care upon the women that create feelings of restriction. Whether it is directly or indirectly, mothers loom large in the home lives of the women creating expectation and enforcing practices that impact on the current home lives of their daughters. The women are aware that there is a complex balance of support and disapproval in their relationship with their mothers and can often struggle to work through these alongside their attempts to re-work their position in relation to their home.

Here I offer two examples of this struggle: firstly, Caroline's experience of her mother coming to stay in her home and secondly Nell's story of deciding to hire a cleaner. As I have already suggested Caroline constructs a narrative of mobility for herself in which she moves between various spaces adopting a variety of positions in relation to the categories of woman, mother and home. She is insistent on the possibilities that this dynamic holds for her and is keen to re-work the home based, and in some ways sedentary, life she perceives her mother to have lived. However, Caroline also tells of the ways in which she attempts to accommodate her mother within that re-working and also how to accommodate her mother's disapproval. She discusses this in particular reference to a visit her mother made to Edinburgh during which time she stayed with Caroline and her partner:

> Oh I know my mother thinks that I get away with a lot [Hannah: in what way?] well, she thinks it is a scandal that I make Jonathon do cooking and stuff like that [...] she just thinks, well she thinks that, you know he works so hard and I should, that in return I keep house or something, you know put on a pinny and make sure his tea is on the table each evening [Hannah: and how does she tell you all of this? Do you row about it ever?] row, well [....] I suppose sort of, I suppose it's kind of a series of little rolls of the eyes and big sighs, you know what I mean? Like when she came to visit us the other week she looked all relaxed and she even said that she, looking forward, you know she was looking forward to not having to do things about the house, free from cooking and washing and stuff, and off she went shopping and to the theatre and everything, happy as a bird [Hannah: and you cooked for her?] yes, yes, but you see that was the problem [...] [Hannah: she didn't like your cooking?] [laughter] maybe! But no, no it was because

> Jonathon, Jonathon did the cooking and it was like, like [...] she was enjoying the rest but couldn't see that maybe I would too, you know, like I should be doing it, but, but I'm like what about my rest [...] she didn't see that though.
> (Caroline Int#3:11-12)

It is a source of irritation to Caroline that her mother does not support her in her efforts to move across those boundaries that serve to make her mother feel she needs a rest. The tight and limiting circle created by the fusion of woman, home and mother which Caroline is trying to work against is being re-drawn about her by her mother in ways that lead to possible points of conflict between them. Caroline, the daughter, seeks to separate those three categories from each other in the hope that, in making them discrete, there will be in-between spaces in which she can exist and through which she can move in ways she appreciates were not possible for her mother. However, those discourses which hold her mother within the home are not only inscribed upon her mother but also worked by her mother and in this re-working are the limitations and frustrations that Caroline tries to break in the rearrangement of domestics tasks within her adult home.

The impact of Caroline's mother's disapproval extends beyond frustration however, and also leads to feelings of guilt as Caroline is forced to question where her responsibilities lie. On the one hand she claims that as she and her partner work the same amount it is only fair that they share the household tasks, however her mother effectively puts doubts in her mind. Caroline explains:

> I still have times when I feel guilty and I think gosh, Jonathon shouldn't really be doing that, I should be doing that and then I think no, 'cos I just, like tonight he was cooking and I was thinking gosh I should be in there ... it is hard to get out of the mentality that I should actually be cooking and sometimes it makes me feel really guilty .. it is a battle with the guilt.
> (Caroline Int#3:23-24)

Caroline clearly feels that there is an expectation that she should carry out tasks such as the cooking as that is her role and one of the ways in which she can offer care to her partner. This makes the decision to re-distribute tasks across the household a difficult one and despite being determined that she will not do all

the housework Caroline finds herself struggle to stick to the strategy she put in place.

The 'model' of mothering and of the co-construction of woman and home contained in the narratives the women tell about their mothers can also be seen in Nell's discussions about hiring a cleaner to help with domestic tasks. The hiring of a cleaner was a big issue for Nell and one that she chose to discuss with me on several occasions. She explains her discomfort with the idea of hiring domestic help in the following way:

> If we can't look after ourselves [...] what can we do you know, if we can't, you know ...I don't know it's all a bit distasteful in a way ...my mum never really had a cleaner ... there's something about if you can't keep yourself and your surroundings clean [...] you're not really coping with things.
> (Nell Int#3:25)

> I've almost been battling with feeling of am I inadequate in that I can't ... (HA: do it all yourself?) yeah, is this a weakness in me, you know ... I do have the feeling ... that I should do that? Should I be doing it all? Should I be able to do it all with no problem?
> (Nell Int#3:26)

> I am feeling threatened, you know, it is my own inability to cope, you know.
> (Nell Int#2:27)

I would suggest that the tension Nell feels between her frustration at having to do household tasks and her difficulty with the idea of somebody coming into her home to do them on her behalf, lies in the breakages between the categories of woman, home and mother that getting a cleaner represents. Nell, similarly to Caroline, marks out paths of movement and accords herself the possibilities of being dynamic across social categories that are different to those she ascribes her mother but these seem to be unproblematic until she finds that she is unable to maintain a home in the way the woman who is her mother did. For Nell, contemplating hiring domestic help fractured the boundaries containing woman, home and mother so that what she understood her mother to manage could no longer comfortably be encompassed and the attempts at reconstruction and mobility that Nell undertook became hard to hold onto. It is as if Nell is caught

between resisting the idea of woman as mothering at home which she understands her mother to have lived and a sense of guilt at failing to maintain the ideal of home as haven in the way her mother had been able to do. Her mother loomed large and Nell held that figure before her through the decision making process, seemingly using it as a mark against which to judge how far she could move beyond that co-construction of categories before she would begin failing to live up to her mother.

5.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, I want to suggest that realising and reconstructing the boundaries around the experience the women have of home is, in part, a matter of recognising the way in which the figure of mother wraps around the idea of home and of woman. I have drawn upon narratives that tell of the ways the women negotiate their way through this overlapping in their memories of their mothers and in their own current day homes and lives. The narratives tell of a symbiosis between the women's experiences of womanhood and the ideal of mother in ways that illuminate the role that home spaces play in that relationship. Indeed, the narratives offer a retelling of how the ideology and space of home wraps around, and infuses, the relationship between woman and mother in ways that the three are in fact a co-construction.

In working with the idea that the categories of woman, home and mother are co-constructed, the narratives also tell of the spatiality of the categories and processes. Within the narratives there is an understanding of home not only as an ideology but also as a space within which the women are physically embedded. The limits within which they position their mothers, and those which they seek to break from themselves, are experienced and realised both emotional and spatially. What can be heard and seen in the stories the women recount is the persistent placing of the idea of women within home space in order that they carry out some sense of mothering or household care. What is also heard is that the power of this positioning is such that those women who became mothers are rendered unable to move out of home spaces or to be

understood beyond the ideology of home. The home is therefore the point from which the complex web of social discourse that fuses the ideals of woman and mother together is woven and, as such, home spaces become central in appreciating that fusion.

There are, of course, resistances to this fusing of categories as the women tell of the multiple spaces, identities and movements they make and inhabit in their current daily lives. However, these stories of resistance also serve to highlight the tensions and difficulties of moving beyond the boundaries that surround woman, home and mother. They tell of the ways in which the pervasive, gendered discourses positioning women at home and in mothering roles are not only pervasive but also persistent in creating pressures and guilt amongst the women. At the same time, the narratives of resistance suggest that not only is the co-construction of woman, home and mother mobilised by those outwith of any given household but also by those within it, as mothers themselves draw the circle within which their daughters now find themselves. This does not make the possibilities for re-working the idea of women beyond the idea of mother and the spaces of home an easy one to realise. Thus the narrative suggest there is a tension between challenge and respect as the women seek to hold onto, and live up to, the memories of their mothers whilst also reinventing what, and where, they as women are.

Chapter Six

Moving home and losing self

> I tried to think that it wasn't the end of the world but at the time it kind of made me feel a bit sort of dizzy really .. I mean that is where I am from and it was all up for sale and I felt, well I think I felt a bit high and dry and like I was being made homeless all of a sudden.
> (Charlotte Int#2:17)

6.1 Introduction

Thus far, I have presented stories that focus on women's journeys through the establishment of home and the realisation of the relationship between their understanding of home and their experiences of being women. In this chapter, I consider the impact that changes in homes and houses have on the women's narratives. These stories of disruption and change arise in the light of decisions to sell one home and move into a new one. They are stories that emerge suddenly, as decisions to move – both on the part of the women themselves and their relatives – unexpectedly appear in a number of the women's narratives. Though unexpected, the power of the stories of moving, and the variety of emotions that run through them, cannot be underestimated. This chapter explores these emotions. In particular, I examine the ways in which they embed the women's narratives of self-identity within particular home spaces and of the difficulties the women find in accepting the extent of their emotional attachments to those homes.

In Chapter Two I discussed the possibilities of understanding home as an emotional experience. Research across geography, housing studies,

anthropology and psychology has engaged with the emotional relationships that create and sustain the homes in which, and through which, people live their lives (Cooper Marcus, 1995; Domosh, 1998; Gurney, 1997; Rapoport, 1995). It has shown that the homes in which people live provide a setting and structure through which they can orientate themselves and make sense of their narrative of self-identity. The home therefore provides a series of anchors through which people can find comfort and stability. Such comfort and stability is, Bachlard (1969) suggests, most fully realised when emotional anchors and events can be located, or fixed, within specific homes. Thus, not only can the idea of home be understood as bound within narratives of self but, also the particular homes that people live in form an important context for the sense of self that they enjoy.

Mair (1995) considers the ways in which homes are woven into people's narratives of self-identity. She unpacks the delicate web of memories and experiences of home spaces, evoking a sense of home that has an ongoing role in shaping her own life, a life that is becoming increasing fragmented through the onset of illness. The web that she weaves lingers upon a number of home spaces; a lingering in which Mair remembers and re-imagines those spaces, people, and relationships that she once knew and continues to live through. Her stories of home – both conscious and dreamy – are embedded within particular home spaces and within the relationships that she places within those spaces. She writes, in particular, of her grandparents' home, a house called 'The Port', the home in which her parents met and where she spent holidays as a child:

> I love this house here as though it were an entity, a living and active presence, aloof but benign ... The passion that I feel for this house will mold my relationship to every other space I occupy ... Does this make sense?
> (Mair, 1995, p24)

The home that she remembers is in the past but in her imaginings it lives in the present, informing and shaping not only her memory but also her current everyday experiences and relationships. Through her grandparents' home, Mair (1995) is able to place both herself and other members of her family: it provides a space that simultaneously holds, shapes and initiates relationships. These

relationships are understood to be important to Mair as it is through these that the web of self-identity she attempts to make, re-make and maintain in her adult life is woven. The house, and the way in which she dreams of it, creates a space within which those relationships can be placed with an amount of certainty that becomes difficult to find in a daily life that is lived through the increasing disorder of her illness.

Imagining the home she finds in The Port as both an actual relationship and as a setting for those relationships that she knows to be important to her, Mair (1995) evokes a sense of home as a context for her sense of self-identity. The home she describes can be understood to be one of those locales that Giddens (1984) suggests are the means through which individuals create routines and certainty (also see Saunders, 1989). As Mair finds her life becoming fragmented through illness, she draws on her grandparents' home to find spaces and relations that she knows are certain. In this sense, the home represents and recreates a framework around which she can understand her self and the increasingly complex narrative of self-identity that is evolving around her. There is a space that she finds in the home - both real and imagined - within which she can appreciate those brackets which Giddens (1991) writes of as being important for the ongoing project of self-identity and which I outlined in Chapter Two. Such an appreciation of home can, I suggest in the first section of this chapter, be heard in the women's narratives. They draw on past homes, revisiting and reworking the relationships and situations they understand to dwell in those past homes in their current day lives and homes. There is a sense of certainty and comfort that emerges through the women's ongoing engagement with those homes and this appears to facilitate, in the reflexive and ongoing manner that Giddens (1991) suggests, their narratives of self-identity.

However, thrown into focus by the events of selling and moving homes, these stories of certainty and routine also come under strain. All of the women engage with the idea of moving; they discuss moving out of their parental home, moving through various rental properties and the potential moves they might make in

their adult lives. Some of these are viewed, as I suggested in Chapter 4, as being progressions along a seemingly natural path. However, there are also stories that emerge as being far more complex than the women might have imagined. In the second section of this chapter, I explore these complications. I draw on the women's stories of their own moving, and also upon the impact of parents selling and moving out of a childhood home, within their narratives of home and self-identity. In some ways, these stories serve to confirm the importance of an ongoing relationship with particular home spaces in order to realise a sense of security and comfort. However, the stories also challenge the ordered sense of continuity that earlier stories suggest and the way in which the women feel they can mobilise their homes to create security of self in their narratives. The women's stories of moving, and of their distress and confusion in the light of homes being sold, would seem to derail their narratives of self-identity. These stories of confusion and disorder do, never-the-less, have to be incorporated in the women's overall narratives and in this discussion I show how engaging with the idea of a web of narrative, as I outlined in Chapter Two, facilitates this inclusion (see Griffiths, 1995).

6.2 The certainties of staying at home

As the stories told through this research develop, the women's narratives become redolent of homes that they have known. Stories of the everyday goings on in their lives make reference to previous situations; the women draw on what went before in order to frame, make meaningful and explain the lives and homes in which they currently live. What emerges, therefore, is a sense of home that is not only in the present but is one that criss-crosses with that which went before. Home spaces woven through the women's narratives reflect not only those social and material relations the women live through now, but also encompass those relations they have known, remember and place in old homes. What also emerges, is that the women derive a considerable amount of security and comfort from interweaving those past homes into their current narratives of home and self-identity. In this section I want to examine this intertwining. Through considering the ways in which familiarity, routines, and the idea of

having roots are reworked in the women's everyday stories of home, I show the ways in which senses of home are richly embedded within specific home spaces. Further to this, I suggest that the women's stories point to the importance of being able to travel to and from these homes, both in their imaginations and their 'real' lives, in order to find comfort and confidence in their current day homes and lives.

6.2.1 Routine and familiarity

A strong theme in the women's stories of home is the idea of routine and the ways in which homes are made up of material and social relationships of familiarity. The rountinised events permeating the everyday activities of the women's home lives create a sense of certainty in their narratives that, although, as the previous chapters have discussed, is at times frustrating, also brings with it feelings of comfort. The familiarities revolve around a number of axes that include the doing of household tasks, the organisation of spaces within their homes, and the ways in which family relationships occur through those spaces. As Caroline suggests:

> I suppose it is all to do with routine, isn't it? You know, you have routines at home, don't you?.. I do think that being at home is about knowing how things go, you know like not having to think about the way that things are done ... it is about having a routine and I know, like I know that for some people that might be dull and it is, yes it is exciting to have everything whirling around and being spontaneous but it also nice to be able to come home and know where everything is, and how things work, and what programmes you want to watch on TV and just stuff that you know how it will be.
> (Caroline Int#1:14)

Similarly, Nell suggests:

> I suppose that that kind of thing, feeling familiar has become important to me, that feeling of familiarity and being used to things and just knowing how things sit you, you know ... and I do think that you get a lot of that through knowing your home and having somewhere that is home and where you are just used to things' cos your home gives you a kind of frame of reference for relationships and stuff.
> (Nell Int#1:3)

Routine and sense of the familiar therefore lie in the most mundane of events and relationships that go on in and around the spaces that the women identified as being home. It involves a sense of knowing and unconsciously predicting; knowing where things are, how things are done and being able to anticipate what people will do and how they will react to things. For Caroline and Nell, to be at home is to deal with the certainties of knowing. It is about knowing the where, the what, and the how; where the tomato sauce is, how the coffee maker works and how long the shelves can be left without being dusted.

The narratives create an impression of home in which routine and familiarity foster a sense of knowing the order of things, which in turn fosters a sense of comfort and security. Mary expresses this as she discusses moving into her current home and making a space in which she feels comfortable:

> When we moved in everything was all over the place, you must know, boxes, and we .. of course we thought we had labelled them all SO carefully, but we hadn't at all [laughter] ... and it was hard to know what was were and nothing was easy, 'cos nothing was where we knew it would be... I mean we couldn't know where things were 'cos they were just a plain box like all the other boxes and it is wearing after a wee while and you never fell settled till you can just put your hand on something.
> (Mary Int#1:6)

> I had to force myself to put some order on things here and I didn't find it easy, but I was being driven to distraction by all the chaos and not having anything that was familiar or nothing like any kind of routine (Hannah: what was it you found hard about making a routine?) I didn't think I was that kind, I don't see myself as really structured, do you see what I mean, but I suppose I am more than I think ... I needed to feel at home and knowing what was what and knowing that some things would happen fairly regularly, I suppose that was a way of making, of feeling at home .. knowing some things for sure.
> (Mary Int#1:8)

Mary's story of moving into her new home speaks loudly of the relationship between the idea of home, routine, familiarity and feelings of comfort. She found that living in an unfamiliar flat, with her possessions packed away in a seemingly unknowable series of boxes, made a sense of home difficult to achieve. Not knowing where things were and what would go on from one

moment to the next was too much for her, and despite her hesitation, Mary found that creating a sense of known order was an important step to take in making herself feel at home.

The relationship between familiarity and home is not only found in the comfort of routinised activities but also in the feeling of home that the women identified. Laura alludes to this feeling when she thinks of her home and compares this with her experience of living in a holiday home while away on holiday:

> It feels like home .. I mean there is just this feeling that I get when I get in here and it feels more like home, and, and I can go to other places which are really lovely and think that I would love to live here and all, but then I come back here and there is something just so being at home about it ... like I know every last nook and crannie and everything is so familiar that it really feels like home.
> (Laura Int#1:12)

> When we went on holiday we hired this little house in France, and it was lovely, and we shared it with another couple and it all worked out fine, but .. and this makes me sound a bit dramatic, but I never felt at home and I tried to make things look as much like home as possible so I can get that feeling .. I'd even move beds around [laughs] .. silly, isn't it? .. but, and even though we had a great time on holiday I was really glad to get back home and feel at home.
> (Laura Int#1:13)

There is, in what Laura suggests, a similar sense of order that comes from knowing how things are in her home. Whereas Caroline's and Mary's stories speak of knowing where things are and the things they do, Laura speaks more of knowing a feeling of familiarity. As she says, she feels familiar with the place that she calls home and this feeling of familiarity is, in part, what makes that place her home. What is also clear is, that just as Caroline and Mary find comfort in the routine of placing and doing things, Laura finds comfort from the sense of familiarity that she finds in her home space. Contrasting her experience of being at home with being in a holiday home serves to further highlight the importance that is attached to the sense of order, comfort and knowing that stems from being in familiar surroundings. Her discomfort at adapting to being at home somewhere other than her flat, and the lengths she will go to in order to

make it resemble her own home, suggests that a sense of familiarity in her surroundings is an important theme in her day-to-day life.

The value put upon routine and familiarity in the women's narratives of home is suggestive of the ordered material and social relationships that Giddens (1984, 1991) understands to be central to individuals' senses of self-identity. As I suggested in Chapter 2, Giddens argues that individuals need an amount of certainty in their day-to-day lives. This certainty facilitates feelings of confidence to know who they are, what their relationships mean, what it might be that they are doing, and where it is that they might going. He calls this sense of certainty ontological security. Possession of ontological security, Giddens claims, enables individuals to have the sense of trust, and the knowledge of that trust, to continue with their various day-to-day relationships. The stories the women tell of their routines and feelings of familiar surrounds can be understood to create just such trust. When at home, the feelings of familiarity that Laura enjoys are such that she feels confident about who she is and the relationships that she carries out, however this becomes unsettled when she temporarily displaces herself to another home for her holiday. Similarly, Mary found her sense of home difficult to grasp when her possessions were still packed away in boxes and her evenings were spent uncertainly picking through them in order to make dinner. Establishing a routine place for Mary's possessions, and for Laura moving the bedroom furniture around so that it resembles her room at home, was a means of creating an order in their surroundings that they both appreciated as bringing a degree of certainty to their lives.

The citing of home as a key location and series of relationships within which a sense of ontological security can be fostered is not all that unusual. Saunders (1989) positions the home thus. He suggests that the relationships creating and sustaining a home represent a routine around which people can create and sustain a sense of self-identity and a security of that self. Likewise, Gurney (1997, also see Swift, 1997) characterises the home spaces in which people live as a series of structures and signifiers that mould and define people's sense of self.

Within homes, Gurney (1997) therefore suggests, are those material, social and emotional relations that create and orientate the narratives of self-identity that people understand themselves to be living. Certainly, the continuity and security that the women find in the relationships of routine and familiarity evoked in their stories suggest that this is the case. Laura's story promotes her home above the other spaces through which she might move as being that space within which she feels the most comfortable. Indeed at various points during our conversations she would evoke a sense of her home as being the one place in which she knew she could be 'real' and in which she could find, and enjoy, a sense of 'authenticity'. The certainties Laura finds in her home can therefore be understood as facilitating a sense of certainty in her narrative of self-identity that allows her to be comfortable with her self.

The link between home, routine and confident narratives of self-identity does not only dwell within the homes the women currently live in and the day-to-day routines and familiarities that they establish. For, while the routines women refer to above are those that they associates with their current homes, they also tell stories that establish the importance of routines that they associate with their past, childhood, homes. These stories are no less about the certainty that results from being able to know that particular things will be in particular places, will happen in a particular way or at a particular time and so on, but draw that certainty across from past homes and times into their current day narratives. Charlotte's story of her father's routine of cleaning shoes is illustrative of just such a crossing:

> You know that you are at home when on a Wednesday night Dad cleans the shoes, well I know at any rate [laughs] (Hannah: no, no, I know exactly what you mean, only my Dad did them on Sunday mornings), ah ... so it is something about home, knowing that your dad will clean the shoes at some point in the week and it is important to know that he will always do it on the same day because that is the way that it, that is the routine and it makes everything, like it's all alright with the world in a way, yeah, I know that things are ok 'cos dad cleans the shoes on a Wednesday.
> (Charlotte Int#4:3)

Interestingly, Charlotte doesn't actually follow the same routine in her own home:

> I would like to think that I would do it ... but, who does clean their shoes really like that, I mean I bet you don't, do you? (Hannah: no, although I'm sure my Dad would dearly love me to) [laughter] but, well, I suppose it is just that I think, well ... I kind of link the two things together and so that even though I don't do it myself, to think of my Dad doing it is like comforting I suppose, it is something about what home means.
> (Charlotte Int#4:4)

The routine therefore exists now largely in Charlotte's imaginings and in her memory. She doesn't recreate the routine actively in her own life, but continues to invest a considerable amount of emotional importance in her father's shoe cleaning routine. It is, of course, not a matter of having clean shoes, rather that the regular and repeated gesture of cleaning represents something more profound about Charlotte's home and the role this plays in her narrative of self. The routine is the means through which she understands there to be order; as she suggests, things are right with the world because the regularity of the routine provides a structure around which to hang other events. Just as Mair (1995) no longer consciously lives out those relationships she found in her grandparents' home, instead finding their power to be in her more dreamy imaginings, so too Charlotte makes an imaginative link between the comfort of home routines she knew as a child and the confidence she now has in her sense of self-identity.

The sense that memories of past homes are imagined and relived in the women's current home lives can also be heard in the women's stories of the ways in which space within a home is used. Often the women would describe and explain their current day use of space in terms of how household space was organised in their childhood homes. The previous configurations, although often relatively inadaptable given differences in housing type, appear to be a means by which the women construct an understanding of how space is used. As Caroline suggests in her discussion of her living room:

> It has to be all things to all people really, so there is the sofa, TV, bookshelves, but then there is the desk, the PC, the table to eat at (Hannah: really multi-purpose) yes, really ... and I suppose for me

> it has been, I have tried to make distinct areas I think, you see the desk and bookshelves over at that end so that it seems a bit more study-ish there and more relax type kind of area here with the sofa and chair and TV (Hannah: why do you like the separate areas?) mmm ... I don't like things to take over, like work to take over .. definitely and I suppose .. I mean I was lucky enough to grow up in large houses, we had enough rooms for there to be a lounge to watch TV in and a separate dining room and we would do homework in bedrooms and then Dad's study, he would work in there ... oh, erm, yeah and so that is kind of what I am used to, it is like that is what home is supposed to look like, gets laid out like. (Caroline Int#1:22)

Re-creating the way her childhood home was organised appears to be important to Caroline because through emulating this mapping of space and activity she can continue that sense of familiarity associated with past homes. She has to make arrangements within the constraints of the space available to her, and understands both the necessity and acceptability of the compromises; however, her childhood home is held up as a template. The arrangement of rooms that she associates with her previous home therefore remains alive in Caroline's current home, woven, as it is, through the decisions she takes about the position of furniture and the ambience that she seeks to create. The arrangements that she has previously known can be seen to structure her sense of home and in trying to re-create this structure, Caroline's story suggests the ways in which past homes can be mobilised to create senses of order, knowing and security of self in the current day homes the women live in.

The women's narratives are rich with stories that tell of the way in which they take routines associated with previous homes and weave them into their ongoing narrative of self-identity. They are, as many of the stories in this research initially appear to be, mundane narratives that tell of those small-scale tasks that become routine within households. However, within this apparent banality there lies considerable significance. The women refer to those things that went on in their childhood homes with considerable regularity; references are made in order to provide explanation and clarification, as simple reminiscences, or by way of comparison and contrast. What is clear is that they serve to bracket off the material, social and emotional relationships that make up home spaces into

those knowable routines and senses of the familiar. Such brackets are those that Giddens (1991) position centrally within his ideas of the self and self-identity and the security of self associated with ontological security. What can also be heard in the women's stories is, I suggest, the way in which these stories of past homes are woven through the women's current day homes and lives in ways that give them ongoing resonance. Thus the routines and familiarities that the women identify as being important parts of their homes are not only those that they create for themselves but also ones that they draw from past experience and their imaginings of those experiences. The certainty of self that is intertwined in the stories of homes does therefore, at least in part, result from a criss-crossing of those routines currently lived and then re-imagined - and therefore relived - familiarities of those homes the women have previously lived in.

6.2.2 Realising your roots

Stories of the routines and familiarities of home life can, at times, be seen as being linked to stories about the idea of having roots. The idea of roots appears in the women's stories to be largely about the sense of having come from somewhere, some home, and some set of relationships that are usually identified as being family relations. The linkage between routine and roots is, in part, that they both engage with a sense of knowing and certainty; they both are understood to underpin the feelings of confidence that the women have in their ongoing narratives of self-identity. As Somerville (1992, also see Gurney 1991) suggests, the idea of home as roots creates a centre around which individual's build a system of identification and a meaningful self-identity. The order that is represented through the idea of roots, and knowing the details of where it is they stem from, offers a way for individuals to make sense of the web of relationships that they encounter and that make up the variety of homes that they might pass through over their lifecourse. In this sense the idea of roots the women refer to are also similar to the role of routines in that they involve a mixed reference to both past and present homes, crossing the two in order to make a fuller picture of the complex attachments the women have to particular homes. Thus, the women evoke a sense of roots in relation to previous homes they have known as

children and shared with their parents and siblings, while also considering the possibilities of having roots in their current day lives and homes. The ability to identify roots is therefore tied into the experience of home because the ability to be able to anchor a sense of self, through rooting it to particular experiences of home, is to be able to grasp, and sustain, certainty in that sense of self.

Grace describes her sense of roots in terms of attachment to those homes and relationships with which she is most familiar. She suggests:

> It means that you are connected in, connections and relationships, things like that, things that I am involved in and really that is centred around home I think, maybe partly because it has always been in Edinburgh so I feel really attached and like, well like hooked in I suppose.
> (Grace Int#1:15)

For Grace it is important to be able realise the ways in which her relationships embed her into a network of attachments. This network holds her in place and feeds her sense of whom she is and what it is she is involved in, both in the shorter and longer term. Just as routine and familiarity serve to bracket off relationships of certainty, so too Grace's articulation of roots creates a meaningful sense of order in her narrative of self. She knows that the attachments she feels to the idea of home in Edinburgh, and to the relationships that make up that home, are a means to finding safe points around which to construct her sense of self. Within the network of roots she feels she has, Grace finds herself able to place people in relation to her and is able to appreciate what the relationships that she has with those people bring to her day-to-day life. As she discusses:

> Like being familiar with the place that you live I suppose, I mean I love knowing where I am and knowing my way around a place and it is the same with knowing my way around my home and my family and what that means ... like, like .. oh, 'cos I know where my life has been, where I have lived, do you see what I mean? .. and what my relationships are, then, well I just feel confident to keep going and I feel safe.
> (Grace Int#1:17)

The lines of attachment can be understood as being a line which lies both around and through that which Grace appreciates as being knowable. In making that

line, Grace feels grounded and she makes continued reference to it in order to move her ongoing narrative of self-identity forward. Grace's appreciation of roots as a series of attachments or links can, therefore, be understood as enabling a progression of self such as Giddens (1991) describes. Just as Giddens seeks to understand the incorporation of the past as a means of monitoring the present, so too Grace actively draws upon her roots as a means of interpreting her ongoing life. Her roots initially act as a starting point, but as she continues to actively seek and incorporate them into her day-to-day life they provide the some of the framework about which she structures her self.

Involved in the stories of roots is a certain sense of permanence. The women generally seek to place their roots in places where they appreciate a lengthy period of attachment. As Grace's story above suggests, having been in Edinburgh for a long time – all of her life bar two short periods away – heightens and deepens the attachments that she has and the roots that these foster. When considering the length of time it takes to establish roots it is possible to see the way in which the women draw on both their childhood and their current homes simultaneously. Nell's experience is illustrative of this:

> When people ask me where I am from I still say _____ which is where my parents are, which, you know I haven't lived there for probably ten years know, and I don't know why really because I really think that my life is now more about where I am here, with Michael, that is more about who I am really, but there is something still important about, I mean I am really attached to my mum and dad, maybe 'cos they have been around for so much longer and their home has been mine for so much longer and so the life I had there is still really influential in who I think I am and so as I am with Michael for longer and our home becomes more established I will say this is where my roots are, that I am from here now.
> (Nell Int#3:1)

Thus, it would appear that longevity of attachment to a home is a factor that the women consider when thinking of the influence that their various homes have upon them. The certainties that remaining within one home therefore lie in the strength of attachment created over time and the rich sense of roots that these attachments lead to. As Nell suggests, despite understanding her current life to lie in the home and relationship she shares with her partner, those relationships

that have been fostered in the home she grew up in with her parents remain a strong marker of, and influence over, who she is.

Such an understanding does not preclude the ideas of flexibility and mobility. There are a number of stories in which the women support the possibilities of travel by alluding to a home that they feel they can always come back to. The sense of home that emerges is one of it being a grounding mechanism, which allowing space for movement also keeps them in place. Nell expresses this when she suggests:

> I think that having some sort of base, being comfortable with having a home that you have roots in allows you to travel away and is why we feel we can really keep travelling away and can keep coming back, because I have a home if ever I need it and so it kind of makes adventure possible.
> (Nell Int#3:4)

> no matter where I am or what I'm doing my sense of myself is fixed I think .. to home, I suppose it is kind of like a tent with guy ropes and if one of those gets cut and the tent might flag for a wee while, but you could, it would still be supported by the home that is still there in your imagination and also there in reality too, and it doesn't really matter where the tent is pitched, it's still what, that home is the still the defining ... structures, it's the base line.
> (Nell Int#3:25)

Similarly, Laura evokes a sense of home and roots that supports, and sometimes eases, the travelling that she has undertaken over time:

> You do have to be strong to make the larger journeys I think, 'cos there are times when it is crap, crap, really crap ... I remember walking past travel agents and seeing flights and thinking, aah, I just want to go and be at home ... yeah, get home but then you kind of think about home and it you kind of end up staying, 'cos I suppose you realise your roots, it's .. it's kind of hard to describe, the idea of roots is a bit abstract, well hard to quantify but I kind of got the feeling of them when I thought of home and the people there and I think it helped me to stay, 'cos I knew that the roots were somehow solid enough for me not to loose myself.
> (Laura Int#2:37)

Returning, in their imaginations, to a sense of home in which they find a safe and knowable basis for their sense of self-identity is important to both Nell and Laura. They both envisage themselves as being mobile across a variety of places

and countries; Laura has already travelled considerable distances to be living in Edinburgh and Nell entertains the idea of working abroad. However both are sustained and supported in this through the knowledge that they have some roots in a home somewhere. Their imaginings of home represents a nexus of those attachments Grace speaks of – the anchors that Rapoport (1995) alludes to – in which Nell and Laura are able to recognise themselves sufficiently to continue their narratives of self-identity further in new places.

This is not to deny the possibility of feeling rooted in a current day home or the confidence of self-identity that result from relationships forged with partners and current day friends. Indeed, the women all discuss the possibility of creating roots that begin beyond those they feel link them to their parents and the childhood homes. What is key to the creation of these fresh roots is the idea of family. Mary describes it thus:

> Having a family I suppose .. it might make a bit more of a difference, make me feel like this is home where I am from, you know that this is where my life stems from .. 'cos in a way home is about family and until you have your own maybe you look back to where you were part of one in a more, like, well in the way you think of a family with parents and kids and stuff.
> (Mary Int#2:22)

Past homes are therefore understood to be a point, or series of points, within which the women locate their sense of roots largely because of the powerful understanding of home being a place of the family. Those homes in which they currently live, those in which the family is not completed by children, are often dismissed as being places through which they are travelling on a journey from where their original roots – and family – are located, to that home in which their own, new family will dwell. As Grace's narrative powerfully testifies:

> I am a real home bird, I like to put down roots, I like to have a clear idea of what my roots are and where they are and I do know that I have them but I know that this home is a temporary thing, once I move into my family house and have my family, then I will have put down my own roots.
> (Grace Int#1:19)

As the women possibly move toward a home in which they have children, rather than being children themselves, they therefore continue to actively work their

previous homes into their understanding of roots. This active incorporation does, of course, maintain the twinning of discourses of home and family in ways that, as I have suggested in previous chapters, the women find frustrating; however, it also facilitates a sense of security and certainty. This security, of knowing where their roots are, is of undoubted comfort to the women and they use it to appreciate the development of their sense of self-identity to date and the possibilities of further development.

6.2.3 Having a home in a house

What also emerges through the women's stories of routines and roots is that the homes of which they speak are not only considered in the abstract, but are specifically located within particular houses. Thus, when Laura speaks of the home she feels rooted to, and the strength she garnered from that feeling of being rooted, she speaks of the individual house in which she grew up and in which her parents continue to live. As she suggests:

> This roots thing is hard to describe isn't it, 'cos like it is not a particular place or one particular thing is it?.. although ... well, no they are in one place I suppose because the house I grew up in is a big part of it 'cos it, like, it houses the relationships that I know and the places that I feel secure in ... and it's been like that for a long time and so maybe the idea of roots, yeah, I do feel that they are in that house, in the home I grew up in with mum and dad.
> (Laura Int#2:37)

Charlotte and Grace also highlight the power of imaging their home as being the actual house it is lived in:

> It does kind of feel like the house is part of me, you know that it is part of the family and that it is part of my identity I suppose ... I mean ... 'cos, well, it's the setting for a lot of things that go on in your life and that makes it a really important place, well really I think it makes it an absolutely integral part of my life.
> (Charlotte Int#2:16)

> so many things are tied up in your home really .. like, you know, my family are there and it's ours, we've got so many memories there, you know, they are all tied up in your home and I know that really it is just a shell, you know take things out and it would be just four walls, but ... I don't know, it is so much more than that,

> so many things are tied into it and it is such an important place, the house itself ... I do think it is so important.
> (Grace Int#2:25)

The emotional and social processes that are bound up in the idea of home are therefore also tightly bound with the fabric of specific houses. Thus, the certainty that the women find in imagining the sense of roots and familiarity they find in home are not floating thoughts but are tied to the spaces in which they grew up. The women's narratives therefore suggest, as Bachlard (1969) does, that being able to fix memories of home within specific spaces is an important part of realising the security that ongoing experiences of home can bring. It is not simply about remembering, and drawing upon, a relationship or event, rather the memory of the event and the space in which it occurred are powerfully intertwined.

There is a sense in which the ideas of home evoked in the women's narratives are ones in which the houses they have lived in come to embody the relational experience of home. This embodiment means that they cast the actual house as a facilitator of the emotional and social stability that they find in the routines, familiarity and sense of roots that they invest in homes. As Nell suggests:

> I think people's histories become embodied in houses ... buying this place and seeing the deeds made me think about how people's lives were lived here and I think about whether they were happy and think it might effect our life here ... and then it also makes me think about the places I grew up and how they hold important bits of life inside their four walls.
> (Nell Int#1:16)

Being within a house that stores feelings and events is therefore a means to accessing those feelings and experiencing them afresh in the current day. Nell understands the home that she currently lives in to also have within it the lives of the people who have lived in it over the years and is alert to the possibilities this holds for her. She suggests that their happiness is important as it has an impact on the happiness that she might enjoy. I would suggest that Nell mobilised the happiness she feels is embodied in the house and incorporates that into her current day life as a structure. Nell knows - or is perhaps comfortable with assuming - the house to be a place of happiness and this serves to bolster the

possibility of her own life in the flat being happy and as such it is a confidence measure around which she can build a sense of her self-identity.

In this idea of embodiment I would suggest there is a merging of the social and the spatial. As Gullestad (1995) suggests, the material fabric of the house can be understood to weave its way through the experience of home that people construct there. The bricks and mortar, decorations and fixtures and fixings can be appreciated as being both symbolic and constitutive of the lives a house's inhabitants live there. In this sense I suggest that both the relational home and the physical house have a role to play in the narratives of self-identity the women construct. From one perspective, it is that the houses provide a backdrop against which the women's emotions and relationships occur. The routines of which they speak in previous sections are mapped onto and around the houses that they live in and grew up in. As Mary's reminiscences suggest:

> I suppose that you do think about where you grow up .. I mean it is the setting for things that you can remember, like oh ... like riding a bike without stabilisers for the first time in the garden, or big time arguments about what I was and wasn't allowed to wear, I can picture the wall paper and my parents sitting in the lounge telling me off and so .. yeah, I mean I suppose it kind of is the setting for some memories.
> (Mary Int#3:21)

Thus, Mary sets her memories against the fabric of the home she grew up in. The house continues to have meaning because it creates a background for her recognition of independence and the relationships she fosters with her parents. Nell draws on a similar sense of the house as context for the relationships played out there:

> I think that knowing the actual house that your family is in and knowing the space in which you grew up helps to contextualise your life and who you think you are .. and .. like I'm lucky because that is a strength because it is a happy home and so I sometimes use the particular image to help calm myself if I am stressed and it helps me sort through and make sense of things.
> (Nell Int#3:14)

The context within which Nell's happy childhood is set is, in part, the house that she grew up in and she uses this in her everyday life to gain comfort and

confidence in difficult times. Her past home therefore has a continued importance because it is where she locates happy times which can help her manage current difficulties; the relationships that she remembers as being in the house therefore appear in her contemporary narrative as a means to structure problems in a manageable form. However, it is not only relationships that Nell refers to. She actively incorporates the house itself into her coping strategy in the form of a visual memory. The social and the spatial therefore merge to create a memory of home that Nell can be certain of and which she can use to good effect in the development of her narrative of self-identity.

The supportive mesh of home and houses that the women allude to in their narratives does, however, also appear as more than context for events. There is a sense in which the spatial and the social become more deeply integrated as the house itself takes on a social function. Laura's story of her childhood home highlights this intertwining:

> Everything has its place in that house, do you know what I mean? 'Cos, it's like, well sure, it's not about everything being tidy or anything, it is about how we all know how to be with each other ... like we can move about without bumping into one another 'cos we know where we all are and how we all work together to make it a home.
> (Laura Int#2:13)

For Laura, the relationships that make up her home and family make sense because they happen within the house she identifies as being her childhood home. The house becomes a synthesising figure within the family, enabling the other members of the household to get along with other. The family know the space and their knowledge of it means that their relationships work through the spaces with – relative – ease. In Laura's description of the house of her childhood, this interweaving of the house and the family becomes more explicitly stated:

> It's like when the family are in the house, the house kind of gives clues as to what they are doing to do ... it is our family really, that is where we all make sense, where I think we know how to be with each other, oh, let me explain better ... when I am here, in my Edinburgh home with Matthew and my parents come to visit, like it is lovely but it is a bit awkward 'cos, like, who is who and what

> roles do we all have? But ... ah, when at homc, back in the house being there I know that I am my mum and dad's child and it is that the house makes us that way with all it's creaky floorboards and knowing which banister is wobbly and all, the house kind of makes us the family we were when we were growing up.
> (Laura Int#2:13)

The particular house is, in Laura's narrative, not simply woven into her story as a series of contextualising routines and familiarities. Rather it becomes an active constituent of her narrative of self-identity. She knows who she is and how she relates to her other family members because the house she identifies as her childhood home is a deeply embedded structure within her sense of self. She therefore evokes a sense of home and self that are intertwined through the particularities of an identifiable house. The house becomes a character, which is intricately woven through her narrative of self-identity, and this intricate characterisation in turn embeds Laura's narrative within the particular character of the house.

What also emerges in the women's narratives of their various homes and houses is that being able to access the places from which their routines and roots arise is important. As Mair (1995, also see and Bordo, Klein and Silverman, 1998; Swift, 1997) suggests, such access is often dreamy in nature and the women do tell of the way in which dreaming of their homes is a source of comfort and confidence to them. Nell suggests this when she discusses her visualisation technique; when in need of stress relief she actively takes her mind to the house in which she grew up, drawing from that the comforts of childhood that she associates with that house. These imaginings are close to the memory houses that Bachlard (1969) constructs: the memories, and visualisation of those memories, create an imaginary space of home within which the women can place themselves within the routines that give them comfort. However, Laura's narrative suggests that there is a role for actually being in the place of the home in order to best appreciate the certainties of self-identity that it fosters. To be in the house, is to feel its influence and appreciate its structures in a very immediate way: when elsewhere, Laura's family relationships are somewhat disjointed, but

when in the house in which they initially grew, Laura finds a balance and can re-establish a sense of order.

The importance of being able to physically travel in and out of those home spaces and houses, which offer the women certainty of self, becomes increasingly evident when the prospect of moving from or losing those houses appears in their narratives. This prospect unbalances the established routines, familiarities and sense of roots that I have discussed in this section and prompts the women to question the security of self that they have thus far enjoyed. It is to this prospect I now turn.

6.3 The uncertainties of moving home

I had not intended to give particular considerations of the events and emotions of moving at the outset of the research. Events, however, sometimes overtake intentions. As the research contact I had with the women progressed, a number of differing stories of moving developed. These included stories of the women moving themselves and stories which tell of their parents selling their childhood homes. While unexpected, these stories offer an interesting insight into the instability that moving home can create in the women's lives. Set against the previous stories of certainty and security, these stories consider the ways in which the women's narratives of self-identity become unbalanced and confused by people moving from one home space to another. At points, the stories seem so laden with anxiety, distress and grief as to almost derail the women from the confident sense of self-identity they like to construct for themselves. Where these stories of problems and those I have discussed in previous chapters differ is that, while the women have found those experiences of home to be tense and frustrating, these stories of moving offer the potential for dissemblance of self. What I argue here is that, while deeply troubling for the women, their reactions and uncertainties toward moving home are in fact part of a web of an emotional narrative of self-identity. Thus, rather than cast the women's uncertainties as critically disrupting their project of self-identity, I suggest that the difficulties can be understood as part of that ongoing project.

6.3.1 Lost lives and misplaced memories

When faced with the prospect of vacating a house, a number of the women speak of their worries that the home they leave behind in that house will be erased by the new home created by future occupants. These concerns are expressed in terms of the changes the new owners might make to such things as the décor, the furnishings, the way rooms are used and the routines that are followed. The women's stories suggest that the home they have worked hard to create within their flats will become overwritten by the home that other people will create for themselves. This process of overwriting, or living over, the lives and homes that the women have been living in their flats cause an amount of disquiet and concern. Laura and Caroline, for example, address the feelings and emotions that having someone else living in their home gives rise to. Their stories suggest a sense of loss as the narratives of self-identity woven through their homes becomes firstly shadowed and then erased by the different narrative a new owner will weave. There is an irony to these stories, however, as they begin with the women's own attempts to inscribe themselves in the flats that they are now moving out of. As they discuss:

> When we moved in here it became a huge project and we did so much work, really Hannah, we transformed this place ... and it made it very special 'cos it was all about us and us making our mark on the place, I mean, we didn't want other people's tiles, wallpaper and stuff, we wanted our own .. we wanted it be our home.
> (Laura Int#1:4)

> When I moved in it was like a whirlwind going through the place with wallpaper and paint everywhere [laughs] but, no I think it is important to make the place look like yours 'cos then, then you feel like you are at home and it is putting your stamp on it rather than living in someone else's home.
> (Caroline Int#1:20)

In order to assert themselves over their new homes the women decorate and in so doing weave some of themselves into the fabric of the flat. Given an understanding of the mutually constitutive nature of home and self, their desire to wipe away the previous owners can be understood as a desire to create a space for them and their lives within the new homes. There is an element of not wanting to be haunted by the previous owner's life and sense of self; cleaning,

decorating, refurbishing, as Hockey (2000, 1999) suggests all meet that end. Cleaning the previous owner's dirt and decorating over their tastes expunge the previous inhabitants. Following such a process, a new web of home and self can be created and Laura's and Caroline's sense of self-identity can be expressed and developed in the flat.

The story gets turned on its head when they come to consider moving out of those homes they have decorated and made part of themselves. Both Laura and Caroline characterise the plans that new owners might have to decorate as being a process of wiping them out of the flats in just the same way they did when they moved in. However, the tone of the stories does not embrace the possibilities of change and the excitement of creating home, rather it expresses their apprehension at what they are losing:

> It will be hard to give my home over to other people, they will come in and make it different, and they will take up the space that was ours, make it theirs, like they might hate the tiles that we loved and they might rip them out first thing, you know and then that is our lovely bathroom gone ... they will make it theirs I know, and like wipe us out of here and that will be very hard, very difficult.
> (Laura Int#2:17)

> I know that she [the woman who is moving into Caroline's flat] will want to change things, you know she will probably not want a pink living room and so will strip off the wallpaper or paint over it or whatever and I think that's a shame, but ... but it's just that, this place is special 'cos it is where Jonathon I first lived, and I don't want to leave my flat and turn it over to a stranger who won't live the same lives as us, who might ride rough shod over us and what we have done here, but she will take that over and she'll, I .. I think she will be living over us and that is right, I know .. but .. just, it kind of breaks my heart to think about it, that bit of us will be gone when she lives here.
> (Caroline Int#3:5)

Moving can therefore be characterised as unsettling, in part, because it involves giving up one home to someone else. Caroline's and Laura's stories suggest that this is an intrusion in their homes and a source of disruption to their narratives of self-identity. Giving over their home to a new owner opens up a potential blank in their narratives as the lives the women have lived in those homes become

wiped over. It is as if, through someone else's redecoration and refurbishment of the women's old home, a period of time and self is lost to them. This loss creates a series of uncertainties in their narratives. How will they manage without this time and space of home and self? What will their future homes and selves mean without the current ones? Such questions, at this point of the narratives, are not necessarily resolvable and the women who were on the brink of moving have to find ways of incorporating these uncertainties, and the disruption they cause, into their day-to-day lives.

The feelings of loss of self-identity that Caroline and Laura identify are not only articulated in relation to moving out of current day homes. Families moving out of childhood homes also prompts stories in which there is a sense of life being lived over and the sense of self bound up within the home being lost once the family has moved out. Charlotte's story of her parents moving out of her childhood home illustrates the uncertainty of self-identity that occurs when lives are lived over by the new occupants of a house. She suggests:

> I am just really sad to be leaving part of my life behind and to think that someone else will not know what things mean and how I chose that wallpaper in my bedroom for my birthday and what a thrill that was, I mean they'll just decorate over it won't they? And why not, it's theirs now, they live there and it is not about us, my family any longer .. it's about them ... but it is awful really, that place, that bit of me is lost to me now I suppose and that is sad, to think it is lost.
> (Charlotte Int#2:19)

The disturbance that Charlotte feels is, I suggest, comparable to that which Caroline and Laura experience. Charlotte's binding of home and self-identity is troubled at the prospect of other people moving into the house that she grew up in and creating a new home that effectively overwrites relationships that she understands dwell there. When she suggests that something is 'lost' she is not only referring to the house itself but also to the parts of her narrative of self-identity that are bound up in the socio-spatial relationships that she locates within the house.

With the loss comes uncertainty as Charlotte begins to question what the relationships of that home mean once her family have moved out:

> Once we've gone from there, I mean once mum and dad have moved out ... I mean do you think that it still, will it still mean something? Is suppose I just, just, it's that I kind of am worried that everything that went on there will kind of get lost, like we won't be able to think about it because, because it will be someone else's home and their home will kind of get in the way of what it means to us, to our family.
> (Charlotte Int#2:20)

Those routines and familiarities that underpinned Charlotte's earlier narratives of home become distant and inaccessible, as another family comes to own the home. It is as if the background, or backstory, to Charlotte's narrative of self-identity has disappeared and, in the void that is left, there is a certain amount of disorientation in Charlotte's narrative. The question that permeates the resulting uncertainty - and the associated insecurity - is centred around her perceived inability to continue to make meaningful that home she has known. What, I also suggest, is clear is that Charlotte's worries are prompted by the changing ownership, and the way in which new occupants will obscure what she understands to dwell in the home she grew up in.

Disruption and uncertainty also surrounds the women's memories of events, relationships and emotions. When discussing moving from one home to another, the idea of memories, and the way they are stored in home spaces, emerges as a matter the women attach considerable importance to. In a similar way to feelings about the loss of backstory, moving out of a home brings anxiety about being able to locate, and access, the memories that underpin a feeling of security. There is deep concern about where it is that memories and feelings about events in the past are stored and what impact this misplacement will have. In discussing the sale of her childhood home, for example, Laura puts great stress upon the misplacement of her memories:

> It's like I've said goodbye to part of myself [sighs] oh ... I do feel, aah ... like everything I know myself to be is in that house, it's kind of abstracted from moments but it somehow happens in place even if it's abstract, it is just everything ... it's everything and that house is a big part of it, it's where all of those memories live on, it is

> where I live, you know, and now that it is gone, where do I put myself, where do my memories go, where do I go?
> (Laura Int#2:14)

Without the house that she has always known as her childhood home, Laura feels the memories she draws upon for security and comfort could become lost to her. Indeed as her story develops she expresses distress at the possibility of forgetting things completely:

> How do I remember everything when I can't see them in that house? Everything is there, everything I think about if I feel a bit homesick is there and how can I think of them now? I mean what if I can't remember ... what, oh, it's thirty years .. and all that, how I can remember all that when my parents live in an apartment that's really a bloody hotel ... oh god, I'm already convincing myself that I can't remember things, like what do all my mother's cups look like and what posters did I have on my bedroom walls? I just feel like, like a huge slate has been wiped clean away and I'm going to be so lost without it all.
> (Laura Int#2:23)

Laura's heightened anxiety and distress stands in stark contrast to the feelings of security and comfort that she speaks of earlier in her narrative. The house that she has always known to be a home winds its way through her narrative of self-identity, binding itself tightly to her understanding of herself. Visiting this home space, both physically and imaginatively, creates a space of structure through which she can realise a known, and comforting, sense of order. The prospect of having that space, and that comforting order, taken away through the sale of the house is, therefore devastating. The devastation Laura feels is, I suggest, further illustrative of the powerful way in which social and emotional memories are intricately caught up in a web of past and present homes. To unpick the home from the weaving is to remove the weft of home from the web and to leave the weft that is Laura's sense of self-identity floating in what she feels is a precarious fashion.

Such a fracturing in the web of home and self-identity can also be heard in Charlotte's narrative. Alongside the difficulties she has with the idea of a new

home being created within the house that had been her home, she has concerns about housing her memories:

> I don't think my memories will ever be as clear .. you know, your home is a big part and parcel of what your life has been, I mean it's kind of inseparable really and when you can't live in it any longer .. ah, it's so hard to think about really .. when you can't live in it any longer it forces them apart and yeah, that makes things, my memories of all the things that happened, the things that are important, it makes those harder to keep hold of.
> (Charlotte Int#2:19)

In one sense, the house that Charlotte has known as her childhood home provides a context for her memories and she is uncertain about being able to remember events without that context. However, Charlotte also alludes to the way in which houses become entangled in the events of home and her narrative of self-identity. Just as Laura suggests, her memories of home, of self and the house she grew up in, are deeply embedded within each other and in this entanglement lies security and certainty. To take one of these away, as the sale of the house does, prises apart the strands of the web and leaves the idea of home and its relationship to self-identity rather lost. The house then becomes understood as an active store of memories that, when drawn upon, simultaneously reaffirms and underpins the sense of home and self that Charlotte enjoys.

6.3.2 Fractured selves or complex webs of self?

Considering these senses of loss and disorientation in the light of Giddens' (1991) construction of self-identity would suggest that they are indeed problematic. As I showed in the earlier discussion of routine and roots, Giddens seeks an understanding of self-identity in which the past is cycled through the present in order that people can make frames of reference about which to understand the current events and emotions they are bound up in. In the stories of loss described above, the past seems to vanish; blotted out by a home's new occupants or through a displacement of memories as the house ceases to be understood as their own. The potential disruption from the loss of the past is troubling because, without it, key points in the women's personal frames for understanding their self-identity appear to crumble. In the wake of this crumbling, I would suggest,

there lies uncertainty and insecurity in the narratives of self-identity that the women attempt to construct. Caroline, Laura and Charlotte all suggest that they are unsettled and unsure about what to make of their move and how to hold onto the meaning of the homes that have been left behind. It would initially seem, therefore, that the uncertainties wrapped up moving home have the potential to fracture, and derail, the sense of self-identity the women enjoy.

This is a dramatic, and potentially devastating, situation. Stories of moving would appear to have the potential to dissemble the women's sense of self-identity to such a degree that they are unable to continue. Gidden's (1991) suggests a bleak outlook for those individuals who lose the capacity to reflect and adjust to the changes they experience and the impact these changes mean for their sense of self. I am reluctant however, to cast these women off into the darkness of constant uncertainty and confusion of self. They certainly experience emotions that at times appear all consuming and difficult to comes to terms with; stories of moving contain tales of anxiety, distress and some senses of grief that cause distress and disorientation. The women also experience a period in which they struggle to situate themselves and to recognise a spatial context – a house and home – within which they can appreciate themselves to be confidently living in. However, despite being unsettled by the changes in their houses and homes, the women's stories of moving are but one strand of story in a web of home and self-identity that contain many other strands. It is true to say that at times Charlotte's, Laura's and Caroline's narratives are dominated by house sales and the problems of moving but to suggest that these stories derail all others would be to over state the case.

How then to encompass the power of the stories without concluding that the women are now lost? I suggest that mobilising the metaphor of web, such as Griffiths (1995) describes, is an answer to Giddens and a means to embracing these stories of confusion and distress in a meaningful way. As I discussed in Chapter Two, Griffiths (1995) argues for an understanding of self-identity as a web; a web, she suggests, offers the chance to hold together the multiplicity of

stories and forces that make up any one person's narrative of self. Just as a spider's web is made up of many strands or threads, so too are the lives that people lead and the narratives of self that they construct through those lives. Recognition of the many stories that weave together in the creation of self of identity is, Griffiths (1995) suggests, liberation from the constraints of more masculinist constructions of self that seek a more unified and singular sense of being The web metaphor therefore moves beyond the line of self-identity that Giddens (1991) suggests, and that which is so threatened by the women's related uncertainties of moving and self, in positive and potentially empowering ways. The stories of loss, both of home and senses of self, while still confusing and at times distressing, can therefore be understood as part of an overall structure that can simultaneously hold within it the loss alongside stories of greater certainty. Thus, while moving from one home space to another does bring to an end a particular strand within the women's narratives, all the other strands of story that they identify can continue and offer overall support at a time of confusion.

This support can be offered even when, as is the case with Charlotte and Laura, the stories are of considerable emotional weight. As Griffiths (1995) suggests, the intricacy of the web – as the various strands and stories create their uniquely woven pattern – creates the strength to bear the weight. Such an effect can be heard in Laura's narrative when she suggests:

> I think I was gone for a little bit, when mum and dad, when they sold the house that sense of security was gone for a little bit and .. really, I mean I think that I was so burdened, with what, grief I think it was, and I convinced myself that I wasn't going to be able carry on, really I think it was that bad for a while .. but I've kind of realised a bit that although the house has gone and that bit of me has gone, I can still go back to mum and dad and, even though they are in a different place, they are still a thread that runs through everything and we will still have a relationship and I can go on with things.
> (Laura Int#4:26)

Speaking some time after the sale of her childhood home had been completed and her parents had moved into their new home, Laura's story suggests just the strength that Griffiths (1995) alludes to. Her emotions in the light of the house

sale were overwhelming, and the ending to that particular space for her narrative was very difficult to come to terms with. However, her realisation that many other strands of her narrative were still meaningful lends Laura strength. With time, she is able to recognise the ongoing web of spaces, ideas, relationships and emotions that create her sense of home and of self-identity. Further to this, the sense of identity as a web facilitates an understanding of way in which Laura's web continues to have energy and meaning despite one influential strand – that of her relationships with, and in, the house of her childhood – having, at least in some senses, ended. The idea of the web, does, I therefore suggest, make a crucial difference in understanding Laura's ongoing story of home and self. Thinking of Laura's experiences and self-identity as a linear progression means that, in the emotional strain of losing the house, the line can become almost irrevocably fractured, whereas the web makes room for the emotions and holds them alongside other parts of her self-identity in a difficult, but ultimately manageable, tension.

There is a further possibility that lies within the metaphor of a web that offers a way to appreciate the continuance of the women's narratives despite their feelings of dislocation and disorientation. When thinking of narratives of self as linear it is hard to realise ways in which a past home space, and certainty associated with it, can be reclaimed once lost. The moment of loss marks out a break that is difficult to get over. However, thought of as a web like narrative of self-identity, the women's stories can re-mould themselves so that fragments of stories can be once more linked into the narrative. As Griffiths (1995) suggests, a web structure is cumulative rather than a progression and as such change and alteration can be incorporated without causing too big a fracture, or indeed disintegration, of a narrative. There is then, even within the stories that tell of confusion and uncertainty, a sense of coherence. Charlotte's narrative offers an example of how this sense of coherence appears in the women's narratives of home and self-identity:

> Ach, at the end of it all I suppose it just makes up part of everything else doesn't it, I mean don't ... like I still think that them moving out of the house is utterly heart wrenching and I

> can't, I don't really understand it all but ... but, well even though it is hard it is part of life isn't it, moving on will change things, sure, yeah but I suppose at the end, and all, like at the end of the day it will make us who we are.
> (CharlotteInt#2:31)

Thus, despite having lost that home space held so centrally within her narrative, Charlotte is able to create a sense in which this loss relates to the other strands in her web of self-identity. There is resignation to the event, and associated emotions, but this becomes a strand in the web in its own right and serves to create another layer of complexity in the narrative that Charlotte weaves.

6.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, I want to suggest that home spaces are tightly woven into the women's narratives of self-identity. This weaving involves many layers and threads as the women draw on homes that they have known previously, those that they live in currently, and ones that they anticipate moving into. Narratives of home and self-identity are thus intertwined; across times and spaces various home spaces are pulled together into a web of experience, memories and imaginings that overlap each other to create and sustain the women's senses of home and self. I have highlighted stories that suggest the role of routines, senses of the familiar and of the women's notions of roots in experiences of home, showing the way in which these serve as structures in which the women find comfort and certainty. The established, and easily identifiable, routines of varied household arrangements and relationships appear in the women's stories as anchors to which they can tether the sense of home currently emerging in their present homes. These anchors also provide points of certainty from which the women can establish a knowable order in their home lives and this order can, in turn, be considered as a bedrock to the women's ongoing narrative of self-identity and the security they feel surrounds that narrative.

The women's stories also suggest that the patterns of home they find comforting are not only those contained within social routines and relations, but that the fabric of the houses in which those routines occur also has a prominent role. Being able to precisely locate, and access, the home space in which certainty is

found is as important as the routines themselves. Indeed, I suggest that the women's stories are testimony to a socio-spatial construction of home. The women cast the space of the house in an active role: it is not so much that the space provides context, but more that it embodies the relationships of the home to the extent that it is, in its own right, a figure of the household. Being able to have an ongoing relationship with the figure of the house is important, and when this relationship becomes disrupted - through moving house - the certainty that is bound up within their homes seems to unravel. Once other people become engaged with the home space there is a sense in which the lives the women are drawing from those homes, and finding security in, are wiped away from view. Thus, it is not only a feeling of being excluded physically from those, known and certain, spaces of home, but also an exclusion from an imaginative, or remembered, relationship with the home spaces.

Such exclusions, or losses, can be heard to cause the women a considerable amount of anxiety and stress and, in these emotions, is a potential threat to their narratives of self-identity. Once disrupted by the sense of displacement the women express, it is possible to suggest that their narratives of self-identity become unsustainable; uncertainty and disorder disables their ability to incorporate a meaningful, and structuring, sense of the past into their ongoing narratives. However, I suggest that by using the metaphor of a web to make sense of the women's disrupted stories of home and self it is possible to hear the ongoing nature of the narratives. The idea of the web holds within it many stories at any one time and allows for the stories of loss and emotional disorientation to exist alongside those of security and certainty. The results are narratives of considerable confusion, but ones that continue to function and hold within them the possibility of the women once more being comfortable in their homes and with their narratives of self.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Weaving stories together

7.1 Introduction

At the outset of this thesis I suggested that while seemingly mundane, the homes in which people live are amongst the most profound of spaces. Through engaging with the routines and expectations that women associate with their home, my aim has been to unpack some of this profundity. I have considered the complexities of the varied social, material and emotional relationships that make up the idea of home in order to understand, at least some of, the fluctuating dynamics of women's interactions with those spaces known to them as home. I have examined women's stories of home in order to gain insight into the ways in which pervasive discourses interweave with, and are reworked in, personal experiences. In particular, I have focussed upon discourses of gender and have considered the ways in which the home is a confluence of discourses that construct particular understandings – and potential subversions – of what it is to be a 'woman'. In order to do this, I have separated out the household to consider the voices the women who live within it and, in listening to their voices, have challenged the often-perceived neutrality of the home. Despite being accounts of home from a group of women who broadly identify as being happy with their home lives, the experiences of home presented here are ones that often speak of frustration, limitation and discord.

The stories told in this thesis also testify to the multiplicity of experiences that lie within any one narrative of home. This multiplicity necessitates an understanding of home as having many layers, textures and faces that while working together, also create what, at times, can be a tense jumble of

contradictions. The analysis of home that I have presented in this thesis is an attempt to hold some of this variety together in order that the diverse tapestry of home can be, at least in part, displayed and examined. In order to do this I have engaged the metaphor of a web and have offered differing aspects of home as strands, or themes, that make up that web. The web, I suggest is a way of meaningfully embracing and engaging with the extent of diversity, and flux, that women experience and the ways in which this finds expression through their relationship with their homes.

In this, final, chapter I conclude the thesis by drawing together the strands of the web. In the first section, I present a summary of the arguments and stories I have considered in previous chapters. I draw both upon the discussions of theoretical matters and empirical matters in order to reassert the understanding of home that emerges in the research. I then turn to reflect on the opportunities that using the idea of a web brings to an understanding of the geographies of home. I discuss this from two perspectives. Firstly, I consider the epistemological implications of conceiving of home and self-identity as complex webs of social and spatial relationships. In this discussion I suggest that the web allows for the many discourses - both pervasive and personal - that are woven through people's senses of home and self-identity to be made visible and accorded importance. Secondly, I examine the methodological possibilities that engaging with a web can bring to research. I suggest that the complexity of webs requires space in which to develop and that I found such space in collecting a small number of lengthy narratives. Narrativised webs, can, I therefore suggest, potentially open up webs of meaning that are sometimes obscured by more conventional geographical methods. In the final section of the chapter I offer some comments by way of evaluation and consider what my research suggests in terms of the continued study of home.

7.2 The stories and their themes

Chapter Two provided a context within which the women's own accounts of home can be considered and examined. In this discussion I drew, what I believe

to be an important distinction between the discourses of housing and discourses of home. The latter, I suggested, can be understood to be a socio-spatial landscape of emotion which provides individuals with not only shelter, but also a series of relationships – both spatial and social – that can create a sense of orientation for a person's sense of self. The home, and its relationships, is therefore proposed as being central in people's lives and as being critical to the sense of self-identity that an individual might develop. Such an understanding of home opens the possibilities of engaging with the richness of people's interactions with the homes in which they live and to create a sense of home that extends beyond discussions of the political economy of housing as tenure. Thus, while I have chosen to consider homeowners in this research, I argued in Chapter Two that this decision rests upon an active attempt to re-inscribe the meaning of home within discussions of homeownership. Such a re-inscription creates the critical space in which to understand the multiplicity of social and material relationships of home.

These relationships are understood to not only position individuals within housing systems, however, but also to reflect and create their subject position in relation to a variety of social categories such as, of particular interest to this thesis, gender. The discussion of gender which appears in Chapter Two supports the need to journey into the home to discover how it is that individual members of any one given household experience and relate to the idea of home. A discussion of home and gender also necessitates an appreciation of the differing scales of discourse that act upon a home and its makers. Thus, Chapter Two set an idea of home as not only a private experience that individual women create for themselves, but that it is also a process of understanding the various pervasive, and 'public' discourses, that act upon the home. The home is therefore a confluence in which popular ideas of gender act upon individuals in seemingly private spaces. As Duncan (1996) suggests, the home is therefore a 'quasi-private/quasi-public' space in which 'public' categories are reflected and recreated within 'private' spaces and relationships. This understanding, I have suggested, is crucial to an examination of home that engages with the complex,

and at times competing, realities that differing members of the home live. What I have also suggested is that such complexities and competitions are particularly important for women whose position in relation to both 'public' and 'private' is seemingly changing.

My desire to engage with the experiences of women also led to a consideration of how to frame their experiences and make some analytical meaning out of the stories they tell. My discussions of this are found within the discussions of self-identity that appear in Chapter Two. If women's experiences of home are complex and fractured, often having to encompass within them many differing roles and demands, it seems fair to think that their constructions of self-identity are likewise complex and fractured. Drawn to the work of Giddens through the appearances that he makes in housing studies literature and the integration of his idea of ontological security into studies of home, I considered his notion of a project of self. However, as my discussion shows, Giddens' idea of project necessitates a linear progression that is too tight and narrow to meaningfully hold all of the pieces that make up women's lives. Thus, I have sought to work with a more feminist metaphor of self-identity. I have suggested that when working with the multiplicity of women's lives it is appropriate to develop an understanding of self that is similarly multiple. This need to recognise the many parts that make up women's experiences of home and self therefore led me to Griffiths' idea of a web of self. In this web there is the space for any number of experiences, subject positions and identifications – whether they be similar or opposing. Thus, the use of a web in order to understand the stories the women tell, frees the analysis I have undertaken from the need to move in an identifiable line and allows it to exist in all of its variety and complexity.

The detailed examination of this variety and complexity came in three empirical chapters. Indeed, the chapters in many ways can seem largely unconnected, linked only by the women whose stories they tell and that they are about the homes the women know. However, as I will go onto to discuss, they represent a number of strands that can be woven together to create a sense of the overall

experience of home that the women have. The stories begin with the events and feelings that surround setting up home and the experience of becoming a homeowner. At the outset the stories appear to exude the aspirations and confidence of the politics of homeownership as an empowering force that generates feelings of inclusion and meaningful participation in society. The women can be heard celebrating their move into ownership and all that they feel this represents about them and also all that this affords them. The stories of celebration largely revolve around the idea of being grown up and the ways in which becoming a homeowner symbolises a transition from pre-grown up life into fully-fledged adulthood. The idea of home, and the way in which this is claimed anew in the processes of ownership, can therefore be understood as marking out a series of 'rites' through which the women feel they travel in order to be grown up. This passage, as I suggest in Chapter Three, occurs through three identifiable routes: firstly through that of independence, secondly through taking control and, thirdly, through the new sense of commitment that is understood as embedded within the idea of homeownership. Ownership therefore appears in these stories to simultaneously be a culmination, a means of achieving and a means of representing some important 'rites' of adulthood. Their journey through the 'rites of passage' that homeownership represents is, I therefore contend, a journey through which the women construct a narrative of self-identity - that of a grown up - which neither they, nor as they perceive it society in general, previously recognised.

However, in Chapter Three I also suggested that the women's stories of homeownership offer a more tense 'rite of passage' then the celebratory tone of early stories convey. Homeownership not only appears to confer an adult sense of self-identity upon the women, but also inscribes upon them the markers of grown up womanhood. Thus, while co-ownership with a partner represents and builds commitment, it also creates relationships of intimacy and care which are highly gendered and problematic. In the women's discussions of privacy, for example, I suggest that their gendered expectation of emotional relationships and caring work within the home, find the women struggling to claim control

over their home lives in quite the way they aspired to. The 'rite of passage' that homeownership would therefore appear to represent is not a simple step over a line but one which weaves its way over a series of lines and often runs into obstacles. The obstacles, or problematic relations, can make, in the context of these stories, a grown up sense of self seem a somewhat dulled prize, as that which is celebrated as being grown up, is muddied by that which is understood to belong to a grown up woman.

The problematic intertwining discourses of femininity and home becomes further apparent in Chapter Four when the figure of 'mother' appears in the women's stories. In this chapter I presented stories that identify and place the idea, and the person, of mother with, and within, the home. As the women continue to establish themselves within their own, grown up, homes they become increasingly aware of how the boundaries of 'home' overlap the boundaries of 'woman', and that this overlap is manifested in the idea of 'mother'. Thus, the women tell stories in which the idea of mother is wrapped around, and woven through, their experiences of home in ways that have direct implications for them as women. In part, I suggest, this is a matter of pattern; the women in this research all knew mothers who were primarily engaged in the care of the home and the household and this creates expectations for their own role as carers. However, these stories also suggest the powerful confluence that home represents. As the women's stories of housework show, their experiences are not simply about repeating what it is their mothers did before them but speak of the way in which their identity as women becomes confused with the idea of the home in such ways as to make them into mothers of the domestic arena. Once again the stories offer a series of tense juxtapositions that, in Chapter Four, set the fond memories of their own mothers against the frustration the women feel toward their own positioning within discourses of home and mothering. These juxtapositions are however held together within the women's narratives; stories of fondness do not supersede stories of frustration, rather they work along differing lines of a web of home and together make a more complete narrative.

The third of the empirical chapters moved between homes as the discussion turned from the issues raised in the establishment of home to consider the impact of moving home. These stories represent moments of confusion in the women's narratives of home and self-identity that differ from those in the previous two chapters. Whereas previous confusions voiced stemmed from senses of disappointment, restriction and frustration, these stories speak of a confusion that comes from sense of loss and disorientation. In the women's stories of homes changing owner, possessions being boxed up and relationships being moved into new surroundings there can, I suggested, be heard a powerful, and intensely personalised, interweaving of home and self. Evoking routines and the senses of familiar as structures around which to construct a sure sense of self, the women's stories create a narrative of home as bedrock from which senses of self-identity can grow. The idea of home is represented as a space in which relationships can be meaningfully placed. However placing, such as is indicated by the women's stories, is not understood as solely abstract, rather it embeds their senses of self-identity within the specific, physicality of a home and house. The home is therefore woven through the narrative of self in both fabric and feeling.

The challenge of this weaving is that once the home they seek to place their memories and imaginings in becomes somebody else's, it appears to be lost. Such loss manifests itself in the narratives as an uncertainty of self-identity. Once without a home to be rooted within, where and what does one become? Also, as I discussed in the chapter, how to make sense of this fracturing to self-confidence and identity? Relying upon the popularly cited Giddens becomes problematic because his totalising and linear sense of self-identity is unforgiving in the light of such digressions as confusion and distress can cause. To lose the ability to incorporate symbols, or anchors, of the past into the present - such as the women do with the idea of routines and roots - is to lose the ability to make sense of the world and the place that a person occupies within it. Such a dramatic, and devastating, indictment of the women's uncertainty has to be unsustainable and so I turned to the idea of a web of self as a means of making

sense of the women's stories. Through mobilising the web, I suggested that, while remaining confusing and distressing, it is possible to understand the women's stories of moving home as being part of an ongoing narrative. Thus, rather than dissolution and disassembly of self-identity, the problems associated with moving home become part of a tapestry of emotion that continues to make sense even when the women themselves feel confusion.

7.3 Reflecting on the possibilities of a web of stories

As the above summary suggests a key concept in my thinking of home has been that of a web. Inspired by Griffiths (1995) use of the metaphor as a means to conceptualising self-identity, I have used the idea of a web as a way of holding together the many and varied stories of home that I have been told. Often stories would seem disparate and disconnected with the women's narratives leaping from one event, thought or feeling to the next without always making the connection obvious. Alongside the women's stories of personal feelings and emotions about home there is also the context of wider, or as I have termed them pervasive, stories of home and women's relationships with the institution of home. These pervasive stories reoccur throughout the women's more intimate recollections and anecdotes; sometimes they are directly referred to, sometimes they are more obliquely referenced but at all times they provide further strands of the women's stories of home. At the start this seemed an overwhelming prospect; how to make meaning out of so much variety? How to make an appreciable story out of so many, varied stories? The metaphor of the web is, I would argue, of potential use in such instance because it allows for such variety and multiplicity. Within the structure of a web it is possible to appreciate more than one point and more than one strand of any given story while also being able to recognise that the points and strands hang together in a single, yet varied web. Spun around many points, the stories making up any given web can emerge from the same point but progress in such a way that their conclusions lie in quite different points, or vice versa. The idea of the web therefore offered possibilities for both the epistemological and methodological aspects of this thesis and in the

following discussion I will consider these possibilities, and the limitations of the web, in further detail.

7.3.1 A storied web of home

In their discussion of home Bowlby, Gregory and Mckie (1997) point to the way in which experiences of home are in fact a series of overlapping and overlain experiences. They highlight the way in which ideologies of 'family' overlap and overlay with those of 'home' to create powerful structures of norms and values that act as a frame for individual people's experiences of their home. What their discussion also implies are the various other ways in which the home is a series of overlapping and overlaying ideas: the personal with the pervasive; the ideological and the experiential; the conventional with the subversive; and of expectation with hindsight. What emerges from these processes of overlapping and overlaying is a sense of home as a mesh; events, expectations, pressures and concerns simultaneously draw together and repel each other to create a rich and dynamic texture. The question is therefore how to take account and make meaning of this variety of processes? By what means should the home be critically examined and theorised?

The metaphor of a web gives both sense and energy to this overlapping and overlaying. The sense that the idea of a web lends to the analysis of home that I have presented here, is that it allows the stories to co-exist rather then making it a battle for that which contains the most weight or can be thought of as the most important. Neither one nor the other is necessarily of greater value in explaining the overall narrative of home that the women have, as without any one of them that part of the narrative is left silent. Of course, there are strategic decisions that I have taken to focus upon the particular stories offered here; these include my interest in the gendered stories of home, my greater affinity with some of the women's experiences than with others, and, to a degree, the commonality of stories across the various women's narratives. However, understanding those stories that do emerge to be strands within a web-like narrative opens up the possibility of presenting the stories for their own sake. There is less need to

consider what it is the stories suggest in terms of a grand, unifying discourse of home and more latitude in which to consider the power that they contain within themselves.

The idea of co-existing stories that, though discreet strands, are woven together into a multi-storied web also allows for changes and compromises to be accommodated. As Flax (1993) suggests, the moments of change in a woman's life are often those moments in which the various discourses that play through her sense of self-identity are laid bare for consideration. The changes, and contradictory fragments of story that result, are, Flax (1993) suggests, those parts of a woman's narrative that encapsulate the dynamics of life. They are however, not neat and to accommodate them within a singular line of narrative is to always render some of them mute. Thus, the many stories of flux and change told by the women in this research speak loudly of their narrative of self and the way in which this interplays with discourses of home and woman. The stories of mothers, for example, are redolent with contradiction as the women attempt to hold together affection and resentment toward the figure their mothers cut. At one moment they talk of the warmth of their mothers' kitchens and the next their mothers' kitchens become a sight/site that they do not want to recreate, coming as it does with restrictions on their spatial and social mobility. The juxtaposition that lies in the wake of these contradictory stories is not easy, nor does it neatly fit into either a narrative of 'woman at home' or 'woman beyond home'. However, it is an illuminating juxtaposition that offers a means of thinking through the socio-spatial construction of woman through the site of the home and the figure of mother. Further to this, and pertinent here, is that this illuminating juxtaposition emerges when the two stories are understood to co-exist as two strands of the same narrative rather then being forced to jostle it out against each other to be included in a 'best fit' line.

The web therefore offers a means of making sense of the many and different stories of home while also appreciating that they make, albeit a sometimes confusing, whole. It also encapsulates the energy implicit in the idea of home as

a dynamic experience. A web is ever growing; it can be spun increasingly wide and ever deeper and in that spinning there lies energy. Stories of home are similarly wide and deep, growing more so with each day, each house, each set of relationships that fill the changing home. It requires an imaginative energy to take all of this and create a narrative and, I would suggest, such energy is not found within a linear conception of home or self. A line implies a certain amount of passivity, a moving from one moment to next that is almost preordained and in this sense without energy. When the many strands of a web are held up for examination it is possible to lay bear the numerous steps, and re-tracing of steps, that an individual may take in their experience of home and their construction of a narrative of self-identity. While Gurney (1997) writes of home as a series of episodes that are called upon at different times to represent experiences of home, evoking the idea of the home as a web of experience encapsulates not only the moments, but also the journey between those moments. Hence, in the web of home I have presented in this thesis, there are not only events but also the movement that holds these events together and this sense of movement, and the sense of energy that it necessitates, is a development in the understanding of home that currently exists within social science literature. In a web of stories it is therefore possible to see how discourse is reworked and resisted in personal experiences of housework, how memory is actively taken from one home to another and how 'rites of passage' are moved through one way and then back again.

A web does not, however, exist outwith of the spinning; there is space within which it can be spun and this space will, of course, impact on the form the web takes. It is useful to think of this space as being defined by strands that are formed beyond the personal experience of the individual women, around which they spin their workings and reworkings their self-identity. These defining strands can be heard throughout the narratives of home in the form of the pervasive discourses or stories. As such the pervasive stories can therefore be appreciated, at least in part, the progenitors of those ideological home spaces the women spin their personal webs of home spaces within. Thus, in the women's

stories of being grown up, on realising the category of woman, and of working through the emotional attachments they have to the idea of home and particular houses, there are also stories of broader social discourse which define being grown up, female and so on. These are strands within a web of home that the women create for themselves; the intimacies of the women's experience are spun around the various expectations and aspirations of others – those both known to them, such as the women's mothers, and those not so readily identifiable. What, I have thus far argued, is that appreciating the women's experiences to be a web allows these discourses of home and gender to be held alongside the intimacies of the women's experiences of home and gender in ways which grant parity of status to both. Parity between these strands allows for the women's experiences to be held centrally in the research and place value upon the anecdotal way in which they come to represent their own experience. As such I have suggested the web facilitates a more feminist approach to understanding home than previous studies may have allowed for as it positions the women's stories centrally within academic discourse. However, using the metaphor of a web can also be criticised for creating an inaccurate and inappropriate telling of the women's stories that flattens out the various strands of their narrativised webs such that the varying importance attached to different strands is obscured.

In Charlotte's story of independence and homeownership that appears in Chapter Four, for example, there is a web a narrative that weaves Charlotte's pride at her ownership with her understanding of how the community in which she grew up viewed women who lived alone. These views were largely negative; 'Miss Smith' was thought of as 'a bit peculiar' because she lived alone and was held up as a figure of pity because she had been unable to set up home with someone and have the full, family life that this might lead to. As Charlotte's story develops it becomes clear that the discourses of home and family that constructed Miss Smith, who deviated from the expected story of home, as a pitiable person are of considerable importance. Despite her desire to subvert the pervasive stories of single home-owning women, Charlotte places great importance upon those views she experienced when growing up and this drives

her to take decisions that she wishes she could make differently. Thus while Charlotte understands her ownership to bring with it independence she is also acutely aware that such independence is strongly mediated by the pervasive discourses that link home and family. The web, I have argued, allows for both Charlotte's feelings of independence and the discourses through which these feelings are mediated to be appreciated simultaneously. However, Charlotte does not appreciate them in the same way, or accord them the same importance. The pervasive stories which mark Miss Smith out as being peculiar are louder then Charlotte's story of her own sense of independence. The strands on the web do not therefore all exist on the same plane. They both make up part of Charlotte's web of home and self-identity but they do not work in the same way, not occupy the same status within Charlotte's own construction of her web.

Of equal pertinence in relation to this discussion of the web and its usefulness in understanding women's experiences of home are the stories of generational tensions that appear in Chapter Five. While it is possible, as I have suggested above, that the contradictions in the women's stories of mothers can be more fully appreciated through the multiple strands of a web, it is also the case that the web creates an equivalence between the varied stories that does not represent the complexity of the women's narratives. Undoubtedly the women present stories in which they reveal the intimacies of their relationships with their mothers and the ways in which these can lead to frustration and limitation. These stories range across a whole series of domestic situations and relationships and holding them together can be difficult and web has helped me to do this. But the women not only spin webs about themselves and their mothers; they also create stories that speak of the pervasive stories about women, domesticity and home that are spun across the generational gap that lies between themselves and their mothers. These pervasive stories have a different resonance within the women's stories of home than those stories of their own mothers. They are marked out to a greater extent and can therefore be seen as lying proud of the stories of the women's actual mothers. It is not that the women's actual mothers are not important, or that the stories told about them do not hold great meaning for the women's

experiences of home, rather it is that they can be understood as being emblematic of more pervasive stories of mother, woman and home. The web metaphor encourages a flattening out of the stories so that they all appear to be equal whereas there is an uneven texture to narratives of home that reflects the differing resonance ascribed to the personal and pervasive by the women themselves.

While the metaphor of a web has therefore allowed me to appreciate the multiplicity of women's experience of home in ways that value rather than problematising the flux and contradiction that this involves, it is not without it limitations. In a web all the strands of story carry the same weight and as such they can be understood to have the same importance as without anyone of them the web becomes incomplete. However, this is to deny the texture that the women tell of. Not all stories are thought of in the same way or are granted the same role within the women's overall narratives of home. In part this is a matter of those smaller scale, more personal stories that the women choose to tell in a variety of voices and dwell upon to an unequal extent. However, it is also a matter of difference between those stories that can be thought of as pervasive discourse and those that are individual story. Thus, while I have suggested that Giddens (1991) offers too stringent a line of discourses of self-identity which individuals must follow, to replace that line with Griffiths' (1995) idea of a web of many, equal strands can obscure the extent to which some strands – often those of pervasive discourses or stories - assume more importance within the women's narratives. As Bowlby, Gregory and McKie (1997) suggest, experiences of home involve a series of discourses, and individuals' engagements with those discourses, that overlay each other and within this process of overlaying there is, necessarily, a sense in which some are more prominent then others. There is, therefore, a complexity to this overlaying; both the personal and pervasive need to be heard in order that women's narratives of home are more completely understood. An analysis that uses the metaphor of a web holds possibilities in this regard as it allows for many stories to co-exist and encapsulates the energy that lies between the personal and the pervasive.

However, it needs to be a web which can make sense of the ways in which some stories have more influence over the web then others and this working out a way of engaging with the texture that must lie within any given web of experience offers a challenge for further research.

7.3.2 A storied web as method

The metaphor of the web is not only of interest when coming to understand the experiences of home that women relate. I have found that employing the idea within the methodological context of this research has also been of interest. I have been very keen to create research narratives that retain within them the density of connections of women's lives on an everyday scale while also allowing for the complexities that extend through their life course and across generations. Knowing that qualitative approaches would be the way to do this, my methodological considerations revolved around how exactly to employ a method that supported my aim of connectivity. I would suggest that the idea of a web of stories has, in large part met that aim and in doing so brings something new to the study of home within geography. In this section of my conclusion I want to suggest that collecting and creating a web of women's stories of home has allowed the connections to be embedded within their experience in three ways, each of which offer potential benefit to future qualitative, geographical research. Firstly, a web of stories creates a depth of data and research that is difficult to achieve when using more traditional qualitative methods. Secondly, the idea of a web builds into the research process the idea of feedback; a web allows for stories to have many, potentially contradictory, strands that loop around each other and such looping needs space within which to emerge. Lastly, I suggest that the idea of a web of many stranded stories allows the connections between experience and theory to be reworked in potentially new ways that, while is not unproblematic, are empowering for women and their representation within academic analysis.

As I have suggested in Chapter Three, qualitative research is strongly associated with depth and complexity. Encapsulating geographies within numbers

necessitates a simplification of the variety that exists within any one person's experience let alone a larger number of people's experiences. Qualitative research steps beyond this need by purposefully engaging with the fine-grained detail. However, how much depth does it really create? Unsure of how to make the most out of the long associations that most people have with the idea of home I have been most interested in finding out the possibilities of bringing a new sense of depth into my research. Using the idea of a web of stories that get woven over a period of time has offered some interesting answers to the questions that surround depth. The web necessitates an understanding of experience that is woven around itself, gradually building the strands together in, as I suggested, complex patterns that have depth to them. The sense of depth is therefore built in. Thus, in seeking to construct research knowledges that appreciate the way in which experience is a web, there lie the possibilities of creating research knowledges that have more depth of connection than might otherwise be the case.

The collection of long narratives in which the tellers of the story remain central during the academic retelling is not necessarily new within social science. Arguably research that makes use of oral history and personal narratives in various parts of the social sciences can be understood as engaging with longer, more gradually drawn out stories that seek to retain a certain level of integrity to the identities of the person/people being researched. However, within geographical work this approach seems little used. Qualitative geographical work tends to be focussed more often on a series of qualitatively orientated interviews that extend across, and between groups. The difference in the approach that I have taken is that, while both allow for an engagement with the qualities of life, my approach places value upon the complexity and nuance produced by a few respondents while more widely used techniques tend to focus on the sweep of difference and similarity that a group, or series of groups, of respondents represent. I would argue the fine-grained attention that my use of web like narratives has a number of advantages. As I have already suggested the complexity of stories – including all the various fractures and contradictions that

make up people's social worlds – offers a depth to the representations of the women. Although the idea of difference is not precluded and does not have to be obscured, the use of the web has also meant the similarity can be embraced. In more traditional methodological approaches there is often a sense of that analysis that works with similarities is simplistic or narrowly focussed when compared with work that deals with difference and the politics of that difference. However, the methodology used in this thesis shows the way in which similarity is a shaded affair within which there can lie important articulations of the quality of people's lives.

As such, I would argue that the use of the web as a metaphor around which my methodology has developed presents work with seemingly empowered and normative groups - such as the women in my study appear to be – in a new light. Thus, while work with normative groups is often criticised as reasserting the power of their normative voices, I would argue that the depth and complexity of the methodology I have employed here re-configures and problematises that privilege which is thought of as inherent. The web of stories collected in this research represents the women's empowerment alongside the ways in which that empowerment is fractured and in doing so challenges the assumptions underpinning their status as middle-class home-owning women. In many ways the women have very similar experiences of home: they are a small group who grew up within happy homes, who aspire to have homes and families that are likewise happy, that enjoy successful careers and the lifestyles that these can bring. However, they also have struggles and frustrations that cut across their more contented stories and within these frustrations are interesting comments on the way in which individuals interact with pervasive understandings of home and woman. I suggest that this mixture of stories is not simplistic and the analysis of it does not produce an unknowing recounting of privilege. Rather, I would suggest that my methodological employment the of the web metaphor can push geographers, and other social scientists, to unpack further the multifaceted boundaries around privilege and marginality because it challenges the way in

which we (de)construct feelings of empowerment/disempowerment and inclusion/exclusion.

The second contribution that the methodological approach I have adopted offers is the particular way in which it engages with the notion of feedback. Built up over a period of time, the web allows for the possibility of change and so the method by which the research is gathered also needs to allow for that possibility. As I suggested in the section above, one of the epistemological benefits of the web is the way it can incorporate, and give meaning to, change and so method has to also give equal meaning to change. Feedback then becomes central to the process and can, I suggest, occur by a number of means. As my discussions of method in Chapter Three suggest, I attempted to build in feedback into the research process, allowing the women the opportunity to change their stories as and when they saw fit. This is not uncommon for many qualitative projects, and so how is the feedback, as I have understood it in this research, built into storied webs different from other forms of feedback? In collecting stories that can be gradually woven over time, I want to suggest that the ability to hold within those stories moments of discord is greater than in 'one-off' research interactions. The women were given the opportunity to change their stories not only in retrospect but also to work through that change gradually within the initial research interaction. Thus the feedback becomes less of an alteration and more of a new strand. The strands sit together within the narrative and, while respecting the women's wishes to keep some things silenced, can be referred to in order to make meaning out of the story's change in direction. Such an incorporation of changing stories into research knowledges is different from research that has preceded this because it gives more meaning and energy to the changes than the more commonly used qualitative research methods in geography.

This idea of feedback has been particularly useful in thinking through the women's establishment of home and the way in which this may be linked to senses of being grown up and feelings of ontological security. At the outset of the thesis I examined Suanders' (1989, 1990) discussions of home and

ontological security and suggested that his linking of ownership and pride created a singular and static moment in which people realise security of self-identity and home. This I suggested was problematic because home is an ongoing series of social and material relationships that ebb and flow over time and space. Indeed, as the women's stories of homeownership that I presented in Chapter Four demonstrate, the feelings of independence, control and commitment that they associate with their ownership are subject to considerable mediation as the women's stories develop and as such are in flux. While they identify ownership as a significant moment, the stories do not end in that moment with the accomplishment of a grown up sense of self-identity. There is, I would therefore suggest, the need to find of method of research that encompasses the ongoing moments of ownership of which the women tell. The telling of stories over a longer period of time and collection of them together in a web like structure of analysis offers the possibility of encompassing just such an ongoing relationship. The idea of the web creates space for the women to tell of their initial empowerment and sense of ontological security upon entering into ownership but also has space for those stories that complicate and destabilise that sense. This is the sense of feedback that I suggest a web like methodology can create; stories loop back around each other in order that they develop both breadth and depth. The stories of home, and of ontological security, therefore move beyond being a series of moments that vary or contradict each other and potentially become a multitude of entanglements that better represent the experience of home that the women construct.

Finally in this section I want to suggest that using the idea of storied webs has allowed me to position the women's voices closer to the theoretical voices that underpin the research than other methodologies might allow for. While not unproblematic to realise, as I discussed in the previous section, the metaphor of web promotes a sense of connection between theory and experience that is potentially more egalitarian and creates a refreshed dialogue between academic voices and the voices of those whom the academy study. Within a web, the various strands that make up the research story can be heard or seen on their

own as well as within the nexus that they together create. Thus, while some may be louder, or more visible than others, those that are smaller stories do not have to jettisoned in the light of larger stories that might be considered – by either the researched or the researcher – as more important. One strand of the narrative or web may therefore be recognized as being more influential than another but the research knowledges the web represents do not necessarily grant higher status to pervasive stories and/or theoretical knowledges. Indeed, in many ways the women's stories of their homes and self-identity are what drive the research forward. As such it might be possible to suggest that the web means experience becomes valued before theory as the women and their stories instigate the weaving. However, theory has played an important role in making sense of the women's stories within a wider social and geographical context and by conceiving of it as a series of strands that weave in and out of the women's strands, it becomes cast as an integral part rather than an instigator. This weaving of theory and experience has, I feel, facilitated the feminist outlook that I wanted to take on this research in that it allows for many voices and recognises the particular 'expertise' that each brings to the knowledges being presented. This is not to suggest other, non-narrativised and non web like, research cannot also have this aim, but rather to claim that it has been useful and might prove useful again in feminist work.

7.4 The end of the story?

In his 1997 paper, Gurney suggests that too much work done on home is mono-disciplinary and that this obscures the richness and centrality that experiences of home have in people's lives. He also suggests that the possibilities for feminist analysis in unlocking the complexities of homes, and the emotions that are captured within them, offer a rich vein of thought and work. This thesis has attempted to answer his criticism and exploit some of the possibilities he sees. I have taken the arena of the home and invested in it a sense of the ongoing emotional and relational process that people turn to in order to make sense of the home in which they live. I have also been alert to the ways in which, as Darke (1994) suggests, women and men have particular, and very differing, experiences

of, and relationships with, their home spaces. Thus I have focussed upon a group of women and considered the way in which they establish and build upon the ideas of home they enjoy while also dealing with the ideas of home that they feel they should enjoy.

The research I have presented in this thesis suggests that, while much change and progress characterises the lives of women at the turn of this millennium, there remain tensions - from a seemingly bygone age - that continue to run through their experiences. That women struggle to gain independence, that they are frustrated by the powerful overlaying of femininity and maternity, and that they are cast as troublesome emotional figures are not necessarily new conclusions. However, their continued appearance in women's narratives of home and self-identity suggests that feminist analysis which seeks to particularise and challenge the lives that women lead still has considerable pertinence. The stories of home told here give powerful testimony to the ways in which discourses of home and gender are tightly woven together and that the tenacity of such interweaving is such that it extends into many, seemingly different, strands of a woman's narrative of self-identity. Given that women are heralded as the new homeowners and are increasingly identified as the head of households many stories would therefore seem to be in danger of being swept away from view behind figures of employment, ownership and empowerment. This research suggests that such statistics should not be used to wash over the complexities of women's negotiations of home and self-identity and can be seen as part of call for the continued investigation of the untold relationships that women have with home.

In making this call, the thesis tells some of those stories of home. It adds to that work undertaken by feminists to give voice to the everyday lives of women and engages with the continued complexities that women live through. In particular I have suggested that women's homeownership, and the way this is related to their sense of self-identity and ontological security, is more is complexly gendered than has previously been thought. The women who I have worked

with do indeed identify homeownership as a force for good in their lives but their stories of attainment are wrapped within understandings of independence, autonomy and commitment that position themselves on the margins of homeownership and security of self. Their homeownership, whether in aspiration or actuality, is always contingent with their relationships with men such that they are reliant on fathers and partners to legitimise their home. When placed against statistics that highlight women's growing investment in property and their financial control over home the stories I present in this thesis offer a reminder and warning that women's involvement in homeownership is not as straightforward as the figures might suggest.

The stories told here also add another dimension to the debate that feminists have developed surrounding the notion of 'public' and 'private' in relation to the home. Research, which initially identified the distinction as a means to explaining women's geographies, has developed a critique of the way in which the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' are actually mapped onto people's geographies. This research demonstrates the ways in which the home lives of women exist between the layers of more 'public', or 'pervasive', discourses of home and the seemingly 'private' relationships that they have with their homes. This can be heard strongly in the generational continuities of gender that the women struggle with. In the stories of mothers it is possible to hear the way in which pervasive discourses of gender are taken into some of the most personal of relationships, that between daughters and mothers. Hidden within what are thought of as private relations between generations of the same family is the power of gendered expectations as the women come to terms with their relationships not only with their mothers but also their gendered identities in comparison to their mothers. While there is work that considers the transmission of gender between generation and there is work that considers the intersection of home and gender the stories presented here brings these two together to give the discussion of home as a space between private and public an extra dimension. As such, this research begins a discussion of home, generation and gender that adds a further dimension to understandings home.

There are of course limits to the stories that have been told in this research. As I have earlier discussed, the research focussed upon a small group of women with particular characteristics in order to illuminate the complexity of their lives, their homes and their understandings of gendered self-identity. Indeed, the metaphor of the web that I have attempted to employ results in stories that are deliberately personal and particular and as such creates a limited narrative of home. Stories that tell the narratives of those who might be thought of as more marginal or who have more obvious complications in their relationships with home do not therefore appear. However, while not wanting to suggest that all research should begin with the empowered as a template for experience, the stories I have told in this thesis do offer interesting points of departure for future research with groups that share differing characteristics. The importance of previous home spaces in the ongoing narrative of self-identity, for example, would be no less interesting an area of research for those who do not share the untroubled childhoods that the women in this research represent. Likewise, the stories of those whose mothers had more extensive and complex relationships with paid employment would contain further insights into the movement of gendered expectation across generations.

This research also suggests there is much room for geography and geographical analysis within future studies of the home. As I have shown through the women's stories, the home is not just an abstract idea, pulled together from ideology and imagination, it is also a space. Thus, the struggles and joys that the women identify as being their home occur within identifiable spaces that serve to both frame and make those struggles and joys. This is not to suggest, as earlier feminist work did that home spaces simply make prison spaces that physically contain and restrain women - although there is evidence that limitation is still a pertinent story for many women. Rather, it is to suggest that the space of the home is an important means through which home is understood. Home space holds aspiration and memory, marks out territory and status, gets confused with social expectation, and provides an arena for expression, contestation and affirmation. The stories I have told in this research speak to some of these socio-

spatial concerns and spins a web that tells the ongoing narrative of celebration and tension that makes up women's relationship with home.

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Appendix One

Letter of introduction

XXXXX

Dear XXXX,

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in my research project.

As we spoke about on the phone recently, I am interested in finding out more about women's experiences of home. In the research I would like to think about the day-to-experiences of home – the way that women use their homes, the work that they do there, the way that decisions are made about their homes and so on. I am also interested in finding out about the way that experiences of home change over time – for example how changes in housing, place, relationships, jobs and so on might effect women's feelings of home.

I would be very interested in meeting with you a number of times over the coming year to talk with you about your home life. I will have some topics that I would I like to talk about but I am most interested in finding out about your experience and so would be very happy to chat about anything you would like to bring up. I envisage meeting four times, either in your home or at an alternative location if that would suit you better and at times that would be convenient for you – I am very happy to meet you in the evenings or at weekends if that would be best for you.

I would like to record our conversations if possible. This helps me have an accurate record of what we talk about and helps when using the records in writing about my research. I will also be making typed copies of our

conversations and I would like to offer you the opportunity of seeing these for your own interest and so that you can make changes or corrections if you think they are needed. I can assure you that anything you tell me will be confidential and is using any of our conversations in my research you will not be named.

If at anytime you need to contact me or wish to ask me anything, you can contact me on the following:

Work Tel: 650 9172
Home Tel: 346 8391
E-mail: hla@geo.ed.ac.uk

Thank you once more.

Regards,

Appendix Two

Respondent Biographies

Laura

Age: 32

Occupation: purchasing manager

Education history post 16: university

Leisure interests: keep fit, travel

Lives with: partner, Matthew

Relationship status: married, 1996

Children: no

Moved to Edinburgh: 1991

Moved from: Canada

Reason for move: overseas experience

Bought 1st home: 1996

Bought with: partner

Previously lived in: rented flat with partner and other tenants

Childhood household: both parents and siblings

Childhood housing history: parents were owner-occupiers; moved once, within the same town, at the age of 4; parents sold childhood home during the research

Nell

Age: 27

Occupation: solicitor

Educational history post 16: university

Leisure interests: team sports

Lives with: partner, Michael

Relationship status: engaged

Children: no

Moved to Edinburgh: 1990

Moved from: Fife

Reason for move: university study

Bought 1st home: 1997

Bought with: partner

Previously lived in: rented flat, sharing with friends

Childhood household: both parents and siblings

Childhood housing history: mainly owner-occupation - one short period of renting while parents' current house was under construction; moved 3 times, once across country and once within the same town; parents remain in the last childhood home

Caroline

Age: 29

Occupation: teacher

Education history post 16: university

Leisure interests: music and ballet

Lives with: partner, Jonathon

Relationship status: married, 1998

Children: no

Moved to Edinburgh: 1989, after graduation moved to London for a year, returning to Edinburgh in 1995

Moved from: Oxfordshire

Reason for move: university study

Bought 1st home: 1997

Bought with: added to partner's mortgage

Previously lived in: rented flat, sharing with a friend

Bought 2nd home: 1999

Bought with: partner

Childhood household: both parents and siblings

Childhood housing history: various tenancies including work related housing, rental properties and owner-occupation; moved a number of times between the UK and other European countries when under 10, and then within Oxfordshire as a teenager; parents currently live in a house Caroline has never lived in

Grace

Age: 27

Occupation: bank clerk

Education history post 16: tertiary college

Leisure interests: singing and theatre

Lives with: partner, Jack

Relationship status: married, 1996

Children: no

Moved to Edinburgh: born in Edinburgh; has spent two periods of time living away from the city - lived abroad with her family for 18 months and when she married she moved to the north of England for nine months, returning to Edinburgh in 1997; during research period Grace was preparing to move abroad for the next two years

Bought 1st home: 1997

Bought with: partner

Previously lived in: rented accommodation with partner, in the north of England

Childhood household: both parents and sibling

Childhood housing history: continued owner-occupation apart from the time spent living abroad; parents continue to live in the house they bought upon returning to Edinburgh when Grace was 9

Charlotte

Age: 27

Occupation: media project co-ordinator

Education history post 16: university

Leisure interests: music and theatre

Lives with: partner, Nathan and tenant, Cathy

Relationship status: co-habiting

Children: no

Moved to Edinburgh: 1990; remained in Edinburgh apart from a year spent working abroad following graduation

Moved from: Clackmannanshire

Reason for move: university study

Bought 1st home: 1993

Bought with: as sole owner, with father as an on-going guarantor

Previously lived in: rented student flat

Childhood household: both parents and siblings

Childhood housing history: mainly owner-occupation, with short periods of rental in-between housing moves; lived and moved within Glasgow as a young child before moving to Clackmannanshire; parents last moved while Charlotte was at university; they now live in a house that Charlotte has never lived in, although they remain in the same town

Mary

Age: 34

Occupation: systems manager

Education history post 16: university

Leisure interests: art and literature

Lives with: partner, Ryan

Relationship status: co-habiting

Children: yes, 1 born during study

Moved to Edinburgh: 1992

Moved from: Glasgow

Reason for move: work

Bought 1st home: 1992

Bought with: partner

Previously lived in: rented flat with partner

Childhood household: both parents and sibling

Childhood housing history: owner-occupation; no history of moving while a child; Mary's mother now lives a house that Mary has never lived in (Mary makes no reference to her father's current housing situation)

Appendix Three

Overview of interview conversation topics

Respondent	Interview #1 **Date:** 22/11/98 **Location:** Laura's home	Interview #2 **Date:** 16/02/99 **Location:** Laura's home	Interview #3 **Date:** 20/05/99 **Location:** Laura's home	Interview #4 **Date:** 05/09/99 **Location:** Laura's home
Laura	Description of home – size, decoration, function of rooms Feelings of affection and satisfaction with home life Buying 1st home – criteria, expectations, compromises Setting up home with partner – issues of making decisions, sharing, compromise Home and family – nuclear family, the idea of family togetherness Changing relationship with parents – with age, on buying home, negotiating the relationship, ideas of approval Repeating her mother's routines at home – frustrations at doing this	Sale of childhood home Home and family – intimate family relationships, home as the spatial context for these Distress at home being sold – a sense of loss and grief The contrast between the home her parents have sold and the place they will live Ideas of roots and home – permanence and stability The ongoing importance of childhood home Life being embedded in her childhood home – sense of self being specifically located in a particular home Feelings of uncertainty and insecurity – about	Work – importance of work life and identity Being different at home from at work Home as space of comfort and relaxation Privacy – from work, a place to be away from a work persona Being real and authentic – at home Status of women – at work, in relation to mothering, within the ideas of home Potential move – preparing for change, the idea of relocation and dislocation Ownership and ideas of stability and permanence Ownership and being grown up – having a grown up/adult relationship	Emotional investment in home – idea of relationships of emotion and intimacy making home Pressures of change/to be seen as mobile Life being embedded in homes – in tension with the idea that life is embedded within relationships that can be located anywhere Repeating her mother's household routines Housework – negotiation who does what, balancing it with other work Differences between her and her mother – home as a place of indulgence and comfort rather than working for her children's comfort Having children – the

	Privacy – private space and time, invasions of privacy, protecting privacy Sale of childhood home – anticipating response and problems of this, sense of anxiety Ongoing importance of childhood home Importance of having continuity and familiarity of home Being practical about housing needs – financial, caring for home, how much space is needed Tension between the practicalities and emotional concerns – feeling pressure to be practical, partner as stressing the practical Financial concerns and commitments associated with home ownership	family relations, about sense of self-identity, about the future Being practical about housing needs - as means to cope with emotional upset, as the right way to think about home Being rational rather than emotional – partner's insistence that she be this way, the pressure to be 'cool' about loss Relationship with parents – the fear that this will change too much once they move Potential move - sell or rent current flat?, the idea of having a base, continuing relationship as it has been in current home Attachment to home spaces – needing to know that she can return to particular places Pressures of change/to be seen as mobile	Continuing relationship with parents – releasing their influence in different ways as you grow up and away from them Differences between flat sharing and co-habiting – changing experiences of privacy, of household negotiations Expectations of a life plan - resisting those expectations Pressures of change/to be seen as mobile – her own moves and the challenge they presented Sale of childhood home Having a home with her partner – more important then childhood home? Ideas and importance of continuity – of home and relationships	pressures to have them, the impact they potentially have The idea of home being about family Ideas of home and care Expectations of a life plan – recognising and then resisting expectations Growing up Independence, autonomy and control Privacy – changing idea of it as she grows up, negotiating those changes Sale of childhood home Home as providing security and certainty of self

Respondent	Interview #1 **Date:** 11/03/99 **Location:** Nell's home	Interview #2 **Date:** 22/06/99 **Location:** Nell's home	Interview #3 **Date:** 21/07/99 **Location:** Nell's home	Interview #4 **Date:** 04/11/99 **Location:** Nell's home
Nell	Home as being about space and feelings Home as a haven – the need to have spaces to relax and escape in Having space of her own Familiarity and security – found at home, knowing where home is Relationship with parents – importance of approval Independence, autonomy and control Moving in to 1st home and negotiating roles – recognising gendered roles Repeating her mother's routines at home Growing up – transition and gradual moving away from childhood home Privacy – claiming and protecting it	Home and family – popular understanding, her own family togetherness at home Status and achievement – at work, in relation to homeownership Importance of work – senses of satisfaction Being different at work and at home – tension between being assertive and being the person her partner wants to be with, being a woman at home not the same as being a woman at work Dependence on parents – for approval, for emotional security Home ownership and being adult – taking responsibility and control of space, of finances, having adult relationships	Ideas of roots and home Home and family – her family being placed in particular home spaces Importance of childhood home – as a base from which to grow up Continuity and familiarity Growing up and moving away from old homes Being left out of childhood home and family relations Balance between change and continuity Attachment to home spaces – an emotional experience, important to go back to them Grandparents' home as a space of retreat and relaxation Financial concerns and commitments of home	Home and family – her expectation of what a family home will be Differences between her and her mother Setting up home with partner – planning, sharing, compromising Growing up – idea of a cycle and having a home is part of that, next step having children? Relationship with parents – importance of approval Expectations of a life plan – recognising and then resisting them, resisting with home routines, resisting through work Home as a sanctuary Keeping work and home separate Emotional commitment to her partner Privacy – problems of

	Expectations – of home, of relationship, of adulthood, of being a woman Commitment to her partner – home as a result and symbol of this Financial concerns and commitments Stability and permanence of home ownership – how she appreciates it and how other people view it Work – pressures, personas Housework – difficulties, feelings of inadequacy	Having and caring for children – how her mother did it, mothering as a job Setting up home with partner – planning, sharing, compromising Emotional commitment – to home, to partner Housework Expectations – especially of the Church in relation to living with her partner Arguing neighbours and keeping up appearances-expectations of happy homes and relationships Relationship between women and home – recognition of gendered roles and spaces Being real and authentic – at home The importance of having senses of stability, permanence and commitment – for her and for others	ownership Childhood memories – a source of comfort, as a source of security and continuity, as a template for current home life Home as providing space for relationships Impact of moving house – dealing with change Privacy Tensions between work and home – particularly acute for women, issues of working at home, having space to work at home Expectations – of cleanliness, of achieving, managing and maintaining and clean home Home as a restorative place Housework – getting a cleaner, inadequacy, comparison with her mother's household arrangements	sharing her space and time, feeling of guilt at wanting privacy Independence as gradually claimed through moving away from parents' home Maintaining links to childhood home – actively sought but often difficult to negotiate, in tension with being adult Being rational about change – the importance of this over emotional concerns The role of emotional links

Respondent	Interview #1 **Date:** 25/08/98 **Location:** Caroline's home	Interview #2 **Date:** 04/12/98 **Location:** Caroline's home	Interview #3 **Date:** 30/03/99 **Location:** Caroline's home	Interview #4 **Date:** 29/07/99 **Location:** Caroline's home
Caroline	Description of home – size, decoration, neighbourhood, comfort Privacy – need for personal space, sharing space with partner, from visitors Home as a haven Claustrophobia Homeownership and feelings of autonomy and control Homeownership as part of progression of lifecourse Housework – distribution of tasks, feelings of guilt Working at home Setting up home with partner – negotiations and compromises Differences between flat sharing and co-habiting Independence from partner	The role of the kitchen as a family space Home as a space of relaxation and comfort Working at home – a sense of invasion, means housework doesn't get done Difficulties in claiming privacy in small flat – feelings of guilt, having no doors in the flat Memories of childhood home and role of that in current day home Privacy - changing sense of the bedroom when co-habiting, always sharing Desire for more personal space – a spare/music room Housework – burden, ongoing problems with distribution, compromise of her time to do it, fights	Moving house Privacy – having people to view the flat, keeping the place tidy Showing tastes – decorations, books etc Thinking about who would live there – wanting nice people Sense of loss – of the flat, of that part of her life and relationship Being practical vs being silly about moving home Financial concerns Emotional attachments to home spaces Independence from parents and parents' home Mother's role at home Changing relationship with home once married – expectations and resistances	Disruption of moving house – uncertainty and unfamiliar The sense of starting afresh – a new life Moving as a grown up thing – adult finances, adult managing, being control as being adult Main door flat and own garden as giving more privacy Difficulties of doing renovations – issues of control, feeling in control in her home Housework and its role in creating home as a haven Differences with living in a more family-home orientated area Having a garden Financial concerns and management Relationship with parents

	The idea of home-making – through objects, through tasks, through processes of relationships Homeownership and ideas of permanence, stability and security Growing up – ownership and being adult Home and family Work and autonomy Difficulties with the role of home-maker/wife Sense of home as being the relationships that occur within the space	about who does it, feelings of guilt The importance of continuity, familiarity and memories Repeating her mother's routines at home Expectations and plans – not living those, resistance to them Living independently as a part of growing up Relationship between women and home – expectations at work, having to look after homes and husbands Having children, working and housework	Relationship with mother Relationship between women and home Homeownership and being adult Being part of her childhood home/household Moving house as a child Financial concerns and commitments – being sensible Putting down roots Work personas vs being a housewife Status and achievement through work Being house proud	– being financially independent Repeating her mother's routines at home Expectations of moving through a housing ladder/plan Home as an emotional investment Children changing the idea of a home and the day-to-day experiences Growing up and the way housing decisions reflect/add to transitions through stages in life Feeling separated from her parental home and family Putting down roots – ideas of being adult and independent from parents

Respondent	Interview #1 **Date:** 26/11/99 **Location:** Grace's home	Interview #2 **Date:** 25/03/99 **Location:** Grace's home	Interview #3 **Date:** 22/06/99 **Location:** Grace's home	Interview #4
Grace	Description of home – number of rooms, decoration, feelings of comfort and security Buying the flat – looking, criteria The importance of privacy Stresses of living with parents before moving into current flat Sharing home with partner – different routines and expectations Current flat as a transitional/stepping stone home to a family home Differences between renting and owning Ownership as a kind of security – emotional and financial Possibilities of renting current home to other people – feelings about	Preparing to move abroad – the stresses of packing Feelings of anxiety and insecurity The idea of treating the move as a holiday The problems of doing everyday things in an extraordinary place Finding somewhere to rent and live in Having people to visit as a means to staying connected to home Importance of partner's job and career Not working and implications for senses of independence Being paid to do housework Managing household finances Roles within the household – ideas of	Childhood home and the idea of permanence Being able to get home easily Importance of childhood memories Personal space and the importance of having/difficulties of claiming privacy – as a child, as an adult Differences between childhood household routines and in adult home Negotiating housework Relationship with her mother – keeping her mother out of her home but going home to her mother Ownership and ideas of growing up and being independent Being independent and then being too far away	

	other people living in her space Wanting emotional continuity between homes Feelings of permanence – linked to the idea of home and family Expectations of home and making compromises Home as an emotional investment Ownership marking out being adult Senses of dislocation associated with moving Importance of familiarity Her mother's expectations of home Housework – in relation to partner's work Being a home bird The idea of roots Childhood memories Work Her partner working at home Personal space and privacy	tradition and gender Trying not to be silly about worries Homeownership as offering security and permanence – won't have that once she moves The need to return home The possibilities for changing herself with the move The difficulties of living somewhere/how unknown to her – how does she feel at home? The pressure to be mobile and flexible The idea of roots – being attached to particular home spaces The idea of home comforts Moving taking her outside her idea of self Loosing her identity when she moves Changing home as part of growing up Importance of familiarity	from childhood home Familiarity and home as a context for family relations Home as an emotional experience Being close – to family, to home, emotionally and physically Managing changing relationship with her mother as she moves away from home Issues of other people's expectations and approval The pressure to change and move, to be flexible Homeownership as a way to make that happen as it allows greater control and autonomy Ownership creating security and stability Home as commitment – financial and emotional Ownership as natural Housework as an expression of caring	

Respondent	Interview #1 **Date:** 01/04/99 **Location:** Charlotte's home	Interview #2 **Date:** 27/06/99 **Location:** Charlotte's home	Interview #3 **Date:** 25/10/99 **Location:** Charlotte's home	Interview #4 **Date:** 13/12/99 **Location:** Charlotte's home
Charlotte	How much she loves her home – feelings of comfort Being at home at her parents' house Home as a place to provide for physical and emotional need The role of the kitchen in a home – idea of warmth Keeping the flat tidy Ownership giving her status – older, more serious Buying the flat – her dad's role Financial concerns and commitments – having a tenant The responsibility of homeownership – sometimes a burden Decorating and refitting flat – a process of taking control and responsibility	Roles at home – parents' role, her role, frustration and confusions Importance/centrality of her mother to her idea and memories of home Overlapping ideas of home and family Childhood homes Spending time at home – being trapped, retreating to home Responsibilities of homeownership – housework, financial management Relationship between women and home – her mother, home and her mother working Copying her mother's routines at home Having children, looking after children Housework – negotiating	Work Being different at work from at home Roles at home – pressures to be a particular way Housework Privacy – getting private space and time, tension with the idea of roles Having her partner move in – problems of negotiating sharing home Differences between sharing with partner and with friends and tenant Relationship between home and family Living alone – ideas of independence Home ownership and experience of growing up Possibilities of selling flat – financial concerns and emotional responses	Importance of childhood homes – feelings of stability Influence of parent's on current home life and expectations of home – positive and negative The pressure to be part of a family unit Sense of independence – ownership bringing this but it is a pressurised thing Ideas of stability – of work, of home, of relationship Having roots in home – having children makes this more real, links between family and home Home as an emotional investment Moving between homes – ongoing importance of her parents' home

	Financial help from parents – mixed feeling about that Moving to a new flat being more independent The idea of home and having a tenant – a home for the tenant, being a landlady Following trends in home fashion Being relaxed at home – difficulties in being that, issues of cleaning and tidying Negotiating housework Changing relationship with home – student flat, type of hostel, party place, home with partner Feeling grown up – home life part of that Living alone and the idea of independence or being 'weird' Expectations of grown ups living in family homes Home as restorative	who does what, getting a cleaner Importance of having a clean and tidy home Moving home – homes being sold, senses of being left out of family Sense of security in particular houses Importance of familiarity of place and home Going home to her parents' house Relationship with her parents – the idea of being an adult child Financial management of home and household Father's role in her home and finances Other people living in her home – being a landlady The idea of roots The importance of family being together in one place	People's perception of her as a home owner Financial management of ownership Redecoration and renovation process Establishing roots in a particular place The idea of home as an escape from other things Her mother's status and work at home Copying her mother's routines at home – not wanting to copy those patterns Ideas of home and care – how this is gendered The pressures of being a landlady – responsibility to tenants, to her father, invasions of her privacy Expectations of future housing - desire to live in a large house, having a garden Comprises that are made – financial and emotional	Importance of continuity, familiarity and memories Feeling separated from her family and parental home Difficulties of change and pressures to be mobile Growing up – being able to cope with change Homeownership as a means of creating roots and making change easier The importance of relationships that go on at home

Respondent	Interview #1 **Date:** 20/10/98 **Location:** Mary's home	Interview #2 **Date:** 18/12/98 **Location:** Mary's home	Interview #3 **Date:** 17/03/99 **Location:** Mary's home	Interview #4 **Date:** 03/08/99 **Location:** Mary's home
Mary	Description of home – type of housing, size, function of rooms, neighbourhood Buying her 1st house – anxieties and celebrations Setting up home with her partner – processes of negotiation and change Joint ownership as a result of relationship, also a symbol/display of relationship Home ownership and feeling grown up – ideas of independence, responsibility and transition Financial concerns and commitments associated with ownership Changing relationship with her mother as she moved into ownership Ideas of autonomy and control – managing	Work – status gained through work, the idea of a work persona Being different at work than at home Changing perception of her now that she is pregnant Home being more 'real', more relaxed Idea of roles at home being gendered – more difference between work and home for her than her partner Relationship between the idea of woman and home Tensions between her want to collect things and her partners desire for minimalism On going negotiations of relationship that happens at home/about home Privacy – claiming and protecting time and space	Thinking of a home from the point of view of safety in anticipation of baby being born Heightened idea of home as a place of family Link between care, nurture and home spaces Spending more time at home – thinking about the decoration much more Having a new kind of community - making new relationships with neighbours since going on maternity leave Housework – changing distributions, issues of responsibility Status of women and the relationship they have with home – brought into focus by being pregnant and on maternity leave	Having a baby Changing focus of daily life – spending more time at home Enjoyment of being at home in a different way than before Being more tied to home – managing going out with baby, coming home to feed baby Different impact of birth on her and her partner – physically, emotionally, socially, spatially Her role of mother being more consuming than her partner's as father Gendered roles and relationships with home Home as a space of caring – for baby and partner, her as the main giver of that care Having her mother to stay – a help but tensions

	renovations Housework – tedious nature of housework, negotiation of who does it and when Disruption of renovations to home life – issues of cleanliness, invasions of privacy Gendered roles – a sense of how to be at home, how to be a woman at home Ideas of care at home and care within her relationship Memories of her childhood home and parents relationship Recognising and resisting the expectations created by ideas of roles and memories	for herself, to do things for herself, invasions of privacy Adapting to sharing home with a partner – redefining her sense of personal space and privacy The idea of gradual change and transition – being grown up, being assertive, being sure of self, being comfortable Using and filling the new rooms resulting from renovations – claiming some space as her own The kitchen as being her space – recognising the gendered nature of this Expectations of how she should be at home – recognising and then resisting them Noisy neighbours and ideas of privacy	Desire for a garden – an extension of house and space Possibilities of moving The idea of a family home Changing relationship with mother – more adult but also more dependent for advice on pregnancy and childcare Financial concerns and commitments – change in focus with spending on home 'comforts' seen as an indulgence, the idea of essential spending Influence of childhood home – fades with time, seems less important with her own ownership The idea of transitions in life – gradual moves from one stage to the next	surrounding that Visits from the health visitor – sense of being judged but also being helped, heightened need for cleanliness and order Impact of baby on sense of privacy at home – finding time to be alone and having a haven Housework – how the distribution of this has changed, her partner's assumptions and expectations Plans to go back to work – potential worries, anxieties, problems and the practicalities of this Home as less relaxing – tensions between caring and working, enjoying mothering but finding it hard work Issues of childcare being recognised as work Popular expectations and resisting them

Appendix Four

Summary of codes

Themes/Sub-themes
Adulthood Transition into; Idea of thresholds; Relation to ownership; Link to independence; Link to control
Being judged By partners; by parents, by friends; by employers; in relation to pervasive discourse
Being practical About housing needs; About financial constraints; In the face of emotion
Buying a home Criteria and needs; Emotional response/feel of the place; Legal matters
Change Positive/sought after; Difficult; Gradual; Pressure to
Childhood home Memories of; Influence of; Ongoing importance of; Mobile across houses; Contained in specific house; Sale of; Parents being there
Commitment To partner; Homeownership symbolic of; Finance - of mortgage
Continuity Of home spaces; Of relationships – child/parent; Of routine
Control Of money; Of decisions about home; Of work; Of relationships
Coping With transitions/change; with work; being seen to be coping
Dependence On partner; On parents; On known home spaces
Emotional Investment Created through homemaking; Making a home; In relationships
Expectations Popular/pervasive; Of parents; For the future
Familiarity Of routine; Of home; Of wider neighbourhood
Finance Amounts of money; Responsibility for household finance; Managing money
Frustration About household organisation; About others' expectations
Gendered roles At home; At work; Expectations; Naturalness
Having children Planning to have; Changes associated with; Pressures to have
Home Description of space; Emotional idea of home; As a process of relationships; Spatial context for relationships

Homemaking Decoration; Relationships; Routines; Doing it
Homeownership Achievement; Positive; Responsibility
Housework Doing/coping with; Responsibility for; Distribution of; Failing to do it; Guilt and inadequacy; Getting a cleaner
Independence and autonomy In decision making; From partner; From parents
Mother Memories of their mother; Own experience/thoughts of mothering; Fixed at home; Constantly moving; Mum working; Mothering and caring; Beyond mother identity; Copying/repeating; Mothering as a job
Moving/selling Part of housing ladder/lifecourse; Expectation of; Difficulties with; Excitement; Sense of loss; Dealing with uncertainty; Leaving self/relationships behind; New people living in their home
Partnership With partner; household organisation
Privacy Sense of personal space; Claiming private space and time; Invasions of; From partner; From parents; From expectation
Relationships With partner; With parents; At home
Resistances To pervasive ideas of woman/mother; To expectations of housework
Status From ownership; From work; As part of a couple
Security and stability Of home; Of homeownership; Of work; Of relationship; Of self-identity
Self-identity Dynamic; Fractured; Certainty; Relational; Pressured
Womanhood Pervasive expectations; Problems; Resistances
Work